

GOSPEL

RECONCILIATION:

O R. H.R. 844

CHRISTS TRUMPET

O F

Peace to the World.

Wherein is shewed (besides many other Gospel Truth.)

1. That there was a breach made between God and Men.
2. That there is a way to make up this breach.
3. Reconciliation, opened in eight Particulars. Twelve blessed Consequences thereof. How to know whether a Mans peace be made with God. Five Helps to make our peace with God.
4. God begins the Work of Reconciliation with man.
5. Our Reconciliation with God, is by Christ. How Christ is a fit Reconciler. Christ hath undertaken, 1. To satisfy Gods Justice. 2. To bring our hearts, and subdue them to God.
6. Gods reconciling the [World] to himself.
7. Why God will not himself im-

- mediately discontinue Gospel Reconciliation.
- 8 The Ministers of the Gospel are Ambassadors of Christ. What kind of Ministry God speaks most in. How we ought to bear the word. The horrible wickedness of those that are idle in the Ministry.
- 9 The exceeding willingness of God and Christ to be reconciled to sinners. Sixteen Arguments manifesting Gods exceeding willingness to be reconciled to sinners.
- 10 Christs willingness to be reconciled to sinners, further opened.
- 11 Objections Answered, concerning the exceeding willingness of God and Christ to be reconciled to sinners.

To which is added two Sermons

By JEREMIAH BURROUGHS.

Published (with a Testimony) by

Thomas Goodwin,
William Bridge,
William Greenhill,
Syrach Symonds,

Philip Nye,
John Yates,
William Adderley



London: Printed by Peter Cole, Printer and Book-seller, at the Printing-press in Cornhill, near the Royal Exchange. 1697.

GOSPEL

RECONCILIATION:

CHRISTS TRUMPET

OF

Peace to the World.

1830

Wherein is shewed (in plain English) the Gospel of the Kingdom of God, as it is taught in the New Testament, and how it is to be received by all men, and how it is to be spread in the world.

1. That there was a great peace made between God and man.

2. That there is a way to make up the breach.

3. That reconciliation is made in Christ.

4. That all men are to be reconciled to God.

5. That all men are to be reconciled to one another.

6. That all men are to be reconciled to the world.

7. That all men are to be reconciled to the Father.

8. That all men are to be reconciled to the Son.

9. That all men are to be reconciled to the Holy Spirit.

10. That all men are to be reconciled to the Church.

11. That all men are to be reconciled to the Kingdom of God.

12. That all men are to be reconciled to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

13. That all men are to be reconciled to the Church, and to the Kingdom of God.

14. That all men are to be reconciled to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and to the Church, and to the Kingdom of God.

15. That all men are to be reconciled to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and to the Church, and to the Kingdom of God, and to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and to the Church, and to the Kingdom of God.

THE BIBLE IN ENGLISH

Published by the American Bible Society, New York.

Printed by the American Bible Society, New York.

Published by the American Bible Society, New York.

Printed by the American Bible Society, New York.

Published by the American Bible Society, New York.

Printed by the American Bible Society, New York.

Published by the American Bible Society, New York.

Printed by the American Bible Society, New York.

Published by the American Bible Society, New York.

Printed by the American Bible Society, New York.

*A Testimony to the World concerning
 several Books of Mr. Jeremiah Bur-
 roughs, that are Printing, and wil
 shortly be Published.*

W*Hat we have by way of Preface set before
 the several Books already published of this
 Reverend Author, Mr. Jeremiah Bur-
 roughs, may sufficiently serve for all that are come
 forth: So that we only need now, to give Letters
 Testimonial to the World, that these (viz. The
 Sermons on the 2 Corinthians, the 5. chapter,
 the 18. 19. and 20. verses. Hos. 2. 14. Prov.
 16. 31. Math. 11. 28. 29. 30. Which are,
 or wil shortly be Printed) We avouch likewise to be
 the painful and profitable Labors of the same Author,
 and published by the best and most Authentick Co-
 pies.*

Thomas Goodwin,	{	Philip Nye,
William Greenhil,		John Yates,
William Bridge,		William Adderly.
Sydrach Simpson,		

The Names of Books printed by Peter Cole, Printer and Book-seller of London: and are to be sold at his Shop, at the sign of the Printing-press in Cornhil, neer the Royal Exchange.

Mr. Hookers New Books in three Volumes: One in Octavo, and two in Quarto.

These Eleven New Books of Mr. Thomas Hooker, made in New-England Are attested in an Epistle by Mr. Thomas Goodwin, and Mr. Philip Nye, To be written with the Authors Own hand: None being written by himself before. One Volum being a Comment upon Christ's last Prayer in the Seventeenth of John: wherein is opened, The union beleivers have with God and Christ, and the glorious Priviledges thereof. Besides many other Gospel Truths, there is also shewed.

- 1 That the end why [the Saints receive] glorious Grace, is, That they may be one, as the Father and Christ are one.
- 2 That God the Father loveth the Faithful, as he loveth Jesus Christ.
- 3 That our Savior desireth to have the Faithful in Heaven with himself.
- 4 That the happineſs of our being in Heaven, is to see Christs Glory.
- 5 That there is much wanting in the knowledge of Gods Love, in the most able Saints.
- 6 That the Lord Christ lends dayly direction, according to the dayly need of his Servants.
- 7 That it is the desire, and endeavor of our Savior, that the dearest of Gods Love, which was bestowed on himself, should be given to his faithful Servants.
- 8 That our Union, and Communion with God in Christ, is the top of our happineſs in Heaven.

The first eight Books: of the Application of Redemption, By the ef-

fectual Work of the Word, and Spirit of Christ, for the bringing home of lost Sinners to God. In which (besides many other seasonable, and Soul-searching Truths) there is also largely shewed:

- 1 Christ hath purchased al spiritual good for H & S.
- 2 Christ puts al H & S into possession of al that good that he hath purchased.
- 3 The Soul must be fitted for Christ before it can receive him: And a powerful Ministry is the ordinary means to prepare the heart for Christ.
- 4 The work of God is free: And the day of Salvation, is while this Life last, and the Gospel continue.
- 5 God calls his Elect at any Age, but the most before old Age.
- 6 The Soul is naturally settled in a sinful security.
- 7 The heart of a Natural man is wholly unwilling to submit to the word that would sever him from his sins.
- 8 God the Father by a holy kind of violence, plucks His out of their corruptions, and draws them to believe in Christ.

The Ninth and Tenth Books of the Application of Redemption by the Effectual Work of the Word, and spirit of Christ, for the bringing home of lost sinners to God. Besides many other seasonable, and Soul-searching Truths, there is also largely shewed.

- 1 The heart must be humble and contrite before the Lord wil dwell in it.
- 2 Stubborn, and bloody sinners may be made broken-hearted.
- 3 There must be true fight of sin, before the heart can be broken for it.
- 4 Application of Special sins by the Ministry

Books printed by Peter Cole, Printer &c.

Ministry, is a means to bring men to fight of, and sorrow for them.

5 *Meditation of sin, a special means to break the heart.*

6 *The same word is profitable to some, not to another.*

7 *The Lord sometimes makes the word prevail most, when its most opposed.*

8 *Sins unrepented of, makes way for piercing Terrors.*

9 *The Truth terrible to a guilty conscience.*

10 *Gross and scandalous sinners, God usually exerciseth with heavy breakings of heart, before they be brought to Christ.*

11 *Sorrow for sin rightly set on, pierceth the heart of the sinner thoroughly.*

12 *They whose hearts are pierced by the word, are carried with love and respect to the Ministers of it: And are busie to enquire, and ready to submit to the mind of God.*

13 *Sinners in distrust of conscience, are ignorant what they should do.*

14 *A contrite sinner sees a necessity of coming out of his sinful condition.*

15 *There is a secret hope wherewith the Lord supports the hearts of contrite sinners.*

16 *They who are truly pierced for their sins, do prize and covet deliverance from their sins.*

17 *True contrition is accompanied with confession of sin, when God calls thereunto.*

18 *The Soul that is pierced for sin, is carried with a restless dislike against it.*

Six Books more of Mr. Hookers in two Volumes in Quarto, are printing.

Twenty one several Books of Mr. William Bridge, Collected into two Volumes. Viz.

1 *Scripture Light the most sure Light: compared with, 1. Revelations & Visions*

2. *Natural & Supernatural Dreams.*

3 *Impressions with, and without Word 4 Light and Law within. 5. Divine Providence. 6. Christian Experience. 7. Humane Reason. 8. Judicial Astrology. Delivered in Sermons, on 2 Pet. 1. 19.*

2 *Christ in Travel: Wherein, 1. The Travel of his soul. 2. The first and after effects of his Death, 3. His Assurance of Issue. 4. And his satisfaction therein. Are opened and cleared in Sermons, on Isa. 53 11.*

3 *A Lifting up for the Cast-down, in case of, 1. Great sin. 2. Weakness of Grace. 3. Miscarriage of Duties. 4. Want of Assurance, 5. Affliction. 6 Temptation. 7. Dissertion. 8. Unserviceableness. 9. Discouragements from the Condition it self. Delivered in thirteen Sermons, on Psalm, 42. 11.*

His Four Sermons concerning,

4 *Sin against the Holy Ghost.*

5 *Sins of Infirmitie.*

6 *The false Apostle tried and discovered*

7 *The good and means of Establishment*

8 *The great things Faith can do.*

9 *The great things Faith can suffer.*

10 *The Great Gospel Mystery of the Saints Comfort and Holiness, opened and applied from Christs Priestly Office.*

11 *Sarans power to Tempt, and Christs Love to, and Care of his People under Temptation*

12 *Thankfulness required in every Condition.*

13 *Grace for Grace.*

14 *The Spiritual Actings of Faith through Natural Impossibilities.*

15 *Evangelical Repentance*

16 *The Spiritual Life, &c.*

17 *The Woman of Canaan.*

18 *The Saints Hiding place, &c.*

19 *Christs Coming &c.*

Books printed by Peter Cole, Printer

10. A Vindication of Gospel Ordinances

21 Grace and Love beyond Gifts

Twelve Books of Mr. Jeremiah Burroughs lately published; also the Texts of Scripture upon which they are grounded.

1 Gospel Reconciliation, Or Christs Trumpet of Peace to the World, Wherein is Opened Gods exceeding willingness to be Reconciled to Man; And Gods sending his Embassadors to that End. From 2 Cor. 5. 19, 20, 21.

2 The Rare Jewel of Christian Contentment, on Phil. 4. 11. Wherein is shewed, 1. What Contentment is. 2. It is an Holy art and Mystery. 3. The Excellencies of it. 4. The Evil of the contrary sin of Murmuring, and the Aggravations of it.

3 Gospel-worship, on Levit. 10. 3. Wherein is shewed, 1. The right manner of the Worship of God in General; And particularly, In hearing the Word, Receiving the Lords supper, & prayer.

4 Gospel-Conversion, on Phil. 1. 17. Wherein is shewed, 1. That the Conversations of Beleevers must be above what could be by the Light of Nature. 2. Beyond those that lived under the Law. 3. And suitable to what Truths the Gospel holds forth. To which is added, *The Misery of those Men that have their Portion in this Life only*, on Psal. 17. 14.

5 A Treatise of Earthly-mindedness: Wherein is shewed, 1. What Earthly-mindedness is. 2. The great Evil thereof, on Phil. 3. part of the 19. verse. Also to the same Book is joyned, A Treatise of Heavenly-mindedness, and walking with God, on Gen. 5. 24. and on Phil. 3. 20.

6 An Exposition on the fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh Chapters of the Prophetic of Hosea.

7 An Exposition on the eighth, ninth, and tenth Chapters of Hosea.

8 An Exposition on the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth Chapters of Hosea, being now compleat.

9 The Evil of Evils, or the exceeding sinfulness of sin, on Job 16. 21.

10 Precious Faith, on 2 Pet. 1. 1.

11 Of Hope, on 1 John 3. 3.

12 Of Walking by Faith, on 2 Cor. 5. 7.

Mr. Burroughs his fifty nine Sermons on Matth. 11. 28, 29, 30. Are Printing

A Godly and Fruitful Exposition, on the first Epistle of Peter.
By Mr. John Rogers, Minister of the word of God at Dedham in Essex.

Mr Rogers on Naaman
the Syrian, his Disease and Cure: Discovering the Leprosie of Sin and Self-love; with the Cure, viz. Self-denial and Faith.

Mr. Rogers, his Treatise of Marriage.

The Wonders of the Loadstone. By Samuel Ward of Ipswich.

An Exposition on the Gospel of the Evangelist St. Matthew. By Mr. Ward.

The Discipline of the Church in New-England: By the Churches and Synod there.

and Book-seller of London.

Eleven Books by Nich. Culpeper,
Gent. Student in Physick
and Astrologie.

1. *The Practice of Physick*, containing seventeen several Books. Wherein is plainly set forth, *The Nature, Cause, Differences, and several sorts of Signs*; Together with the Cure of all Diseases in the Body of Man. Being a Translation of the Works of that Learned and Renowned Doctor, *Lazarus Riverius*, now living; Counsellor and Physician to the present King of France. Above fifteen thousand of the said Books in Latin have been sold in a very few Years, having been eight times printed, though all the former Impressions waited the Nature, Causes, Signs, and Differences of the Diseases, and had only the Medicines for the cure for them; as plainly appears by the Authors Epistle.

2. *A Sure Guide to Physick and Chyrurgery*: That is to say, *The Arts of Healing by Medicine, and Manual Operation*. Being an Anatomical Description of the whole body of Man, and its parts, with their Respective diseases, demonstrated from the Fabrick and use of the said Parts. In Six Books of *Riolanus*, translated, and adorned with a hundred eighty four Figures cut in Brals.

3 *Veslingius Anatomy of the Body of Man*, Wherein is exactly described, the several Parts of the Body of Man, illustrated with very many larger Brals. Places than ever was in English before.

4 *A Translation of the New dispensatory*, made by the Colleg of Physicians of London. Whereunto is added *The Key to Galens Method of Physick*,

5 *The English Physician enlarged*. being an Astrologo-Physical Discourse of the vulgar Herbs of this Nation; wherein is shewed how to cure a mans self of most Diseases incident to Mans

Body, with such things as grow in England, and for three pence charge. Also in the same Book is shewed,
1 The time of gathering all Herbs, both |Vulgarly and Astrologically.
2 The way of drying, and keeping them and their Juices. 3 The way of making and keeping all manner of useful Compounds; made of those Herbs. The way of mixing the Medicines according to the Cause, and Mixture of the Disease, and the part of the Body afflicted.

6 *A Directory for Midwives, or a Guide for Women*. Newly enlarged by the Author in every sheet, and illustrated with divers new Plates.

7 *Galens Art of Physick*, with a large Comment.

8 *A New Method both of studying and practising Physick*.

9 *A Treatise of the Rickets*, being a Disease common to Children wherein is shewed; 1 The Essence, 2 The Causes, 3 The Signs, 4 The Remedies of the Disease. Published in Latin by Dr. Glisson, Dr. Bates and Dr. Regemortier, translated into English, And corrected by N. Culpeper.

10 *Medicaments for the Poor, Or Physick for the Common People*.

11 *Health for the Rich and Poor*, by Dyet without Physick.

The Idea of Practical Physick, in twelve Books, are Printing.

The *London Dispensatory* in Folio, of a large Character in Latine.

The *London Dispensatory* in twelves, a smal Pocket Book in Latine.

The Royal and Delightful Game of Picquet, written in French, and now rendered into English. Octavo.

The Golden Rule of Justice Advanced.

Books printed by Peter Cole, Printer

Six Sermons preached by Dr.

Hill. Viz.

1 The Beauty and Sweetness of an Olive Branch of Peace, and Brotherly Accommodation budding.

2 Truth and Love happily married in the Church of Christ.

3 The Spring of strengthening Grace in the Rock of Ages Christ Jesus.

4 The strength of the Saints to make Jesus Christ their strength.

5 The Best and Worst of Paul.

6 Gods Eternal preparation for his Dying Saints.

A Commemoration of King *Charls* his Inauguration. In a Sermon, By *William Laud*, then Bishop of *Canterbury*.

Abrahams Offer, Gods Offering : Being a Sermon by Mr. *Heyle*, before the Lord Major of *London*.

Mr. *Spurflows*. Sermon, being a Pattern of Repentance.

Englands Deliverance from the Northern Presbitery, compared with its Deliverance from the Roman Papacy. In a Sermon on the 5 of Nov. 1651. before the Parliament. By *Peter Sterry*.

The Way of God with his People in these Nations. Opened in a Thanksgiving Sermon, preached on the 5 of Novemb. 1656. before the Right Honorable, the High Court of Parliament. By *Peter Sterry*.

Mr. *Symphons* Sermon at *westminster*

Mr. *Feaks* Sermon before the Lord Major.

The Best and Worst Magistrate. By *Obadiab Sedgwick*. A Sermon.

A Sacred Panegyrick. By *Stephen Martial*. A Sermon.

The Crime and Cruelty of the Churches Adversaries. By *Matthew Newcomin*. A Sermon,

Mr. *Owens* steadfastness of the Promises. A Sermon.

A Vindication of Free Grace : Endeavoring to prove, 1. That we are not elected as holy, but that we should be holy ; and that Election is not of kinds, but persons. 2. that Christ did not by his death intend to save all men, and reaching those whom he intended to save, that he did not die for them only, if they would believe, but that they might believe. 3. that we are justified properly by our believing in Christ, but by our Christ, believing in him. 4. that which differenceth one man from another, is not the improvement of a common ability restored through Christ to all men in general, but a principle, of Grace wrought by the Spirit of God in the Elect. By *John Pawson*. A Sermon.

The Magistrates Support and Burden. By Mr. *John Cordel*. A Sermon.

Eaton on the Oath of Allegiance and Covenant, shewing that they oblige not.

A Relation of the Barbadoes.

A Relation of the Repentance and Conversion of the Indians in New-England : by Mr. *Slip*, and Mr. *Mayhew*.

The Institutes of the Laws of England, by *John Cowel*. Octavo.

A Description of the Grand Signiors *Seraglio* ; or the Turkish Emperors Court. By *John Greaves*. Octavo. The reigning Error arraigned at the Bar of Scripture, and Reason. By *Francis Fulwood*. Octavo.

The state of future Life. By *Thomas White*. twelves.

Mr. *Phillips* Treatise of Hell.

— of Christs Genealogy.

The Cause of our Divisions discovered, and the Cure propounded.

Mr.

and Book seller of London.

Mr. Brightman on the Revelation.
Clows Chyrurgery.

Marks of Salvation.

Christians Engagement for the Gospel, by *John Goodwin.*

Great Church Ordinance of Baptism

Mr. Loves Case, containing his Petitions, Narrative, and Speech.

A Congregational Church is a Catholic Visible Church. By *Samuel Stone* in New-England.

A Treatise of Politick Powers, wherein seven Questions are answered, 1 Whereof Power is made, and for what ordained. 2 Whether Kings and Governors have an Absolute Power over the People. 3 Whether Kings and Governors be subject to the Laws of God, or the Laws of their Country. 4 How far the People are to obey their Governors. 5 Whether al the People have, be their Governors. 6 Whether it be Lawful to depose an evil Governor. 7 What Confidence is to be given to Princes.

The Compassionate Samaritan;

Dr. Sibbs on the Philippians.

Vox Pacifica, or a Persuasive to Peace.

Dr. Prestons Saints submission, and Satans Overthrow.

Pious Mans Practice in Parliament time.

Barriffs Military Discipline.

The Immortality of Mans Soul

The Anatomist Anatomized

The Bishop of *Canterbury's* Speech on the Scaffold.

The King's Speech on the Scaffold.

A Looking-Glass for the Anabaptists.

Woodwards Sacred Ballance.

Dr. Owen against Mr. Baxter

King *Charles* his Case, or an Appeal to al Rational men concerning his tryal.

De Corpore Politico: Or [the Elements of Law, Moral and Politick. By *Thomas Hobbs* of *Malmesbury*.

The Copy-holders Plea, against the excess of Fines uncertain exacted of them by their Lords upon their Admittance.

A Trumpeter sent by God to all Europe.

Woodwards Antidote against the Plague-fores, in Mr. *Edwards* his Gangrens.

Baptism; Breaking Bread, or the Lords Supper briefly discussed.

The Army Vindicated

The

The Contents.

CHAP. I.	Page
Chap. 2. That there was a breach made between God and man after a blessed Union.	I
Chap. 3. That there is a way to make up a Peace between God and Sinful Man.	3
Chap. 4. Reconciliation Opened, 1. By it Gods enmity is taken away. 2. The enmity on the souls part is taken away. 3. God taketh into intire Love. 4. By it thou comest to be in League and Covenant with God. 5. The soul is perfectly Reconciled. 6. This Reconciliation is everlasting. 7. It continues notwithstanding al thy sins. 8. The Devils accusations shal never make God thy Enemy again.	11
Chap. 5. Twelve Blessed Consequences of our Reconciliation.	17
Chap. 6. Use, 1.	25
Chap. 7. Use, 2.	34
Chap. 8. How to know whether a mans Peace be made with God, opened in in seven Particulars.	38
1. Every weapon of war against God is laid down	
2. There hath been treaties of Peace between God and that soul. 3. Peace with God wil make thee abhor thy self for thy former cursed waies. 4. It wil make thee on Gods side. 5. It wil preserve from evil. 6. It wil enable thee to suffer much. 7. It wil make thee highly prise it.	41
Chap. 9.	

THE CONTENTS.

	Page
Chap. 9. Use, 3. To seek to make our Peace with God: five helps thereunto. 1. Keep from the outward Acts of sin. 2. Labor to set God continually before you. 3. Resolve not to be at Peace with your selves til you be at Peace with God. 4. Seek Peace with God on his own Conditions. 5. Prize Peace with God now, as you wil value it at the day of judgement.	50
Chap. 10. God begins the work of Reconciliation with man.	59
Chap. 11. Use of Gods beginning with man to be Reconciled. Use, 1. Admire his goodness in beginning, seeing he had no need of us; and had so great advantage against us. Use, 2. Begin to seek peace even with our inferiours. Use, 3. The certainty of our salvation being reconciled. Use, 4. Not to be backward and hang off when God calls to duty.	61
Chap. 12. Doct. Our Reconciliation with God is made in Christ. Seven things propounded for opening the Doctrin.	67
Chap. 13. The necessity of Christs coming in, for our Reconciliation.	73
Chap. 14. How Christ comes to be a fit Reconciler. Opened in seven Particulars; 1. Because he is the second person in the Trinity. 2. He hath taken our Nature on him. 3. He knows fully the mind of the Father. 4. He knows what wil satisfy the Father. 5. God the Father doth infinitely Love him. 6. He never offended the Father. 7. What he doth hath infinite efficacy and worth.	76
Chap. 15. What Christ hath undertaken and performed in our Reconciliation; 1. To satisfy Gods Justice, 2. To bring our hearts and subdue them to God.	82
C	Chap. 16.

THE CONTENTS.

	Page
Chap. 16. <i>How what Christ hath done for Our Reconciliation, come to be made Ours, 1. Christ the head of the second Covenant.</i>	87
Chap. 17. <i>How we come to have interest in what Christ hath done is further opened.</i>	89
Chap. 18. <i>Eight Consequences of Our Reconciliation being made in Christ. 1. It is a deep Mystery</i> <i>2. It is very free. 3. It is sure and certain. 4. It is full. 5. It is an honorable way. 6. Yet in such a way as doth debase man. 7. It is firm and everlasting. 8. This Reconciliation was a very difficult work.</i>	91
Chap. 19. <i>Three Reasons why God would be Reconciled to the world in Christ and no other way. 1. Because God the Son is most glorified this way. 2. Because God the Father is most glorified this way. 3. Because there was no such way as this to melt the hearts of sinners. Or to encourage them to come to God.</i>	100
Chap. 20. <i>Application. Use, 1. See the woful misery sin hath brought us unto; humiliation for sin useful.</i>	106
Chap. 21. <i>Use, 2. Discovering of Mistakes about Reconciliation.</i>	111
Chap. 22. <i>Use, 3. To encourage sinners to come to God for Reconciliation: And discouragements removed.</i>	113
Chap. 23. <i>Use, 4. Dispaire not of Gods making peace in this Nation.</i>	118
Chap. 24. <i>Use, 5. Those that have assurance of their peace with God; highly to prize it.</i>	121
Chap. 25. <i>Christians may loose the assurance of their Peace with God through the weaknes of their Faith. 1. Weakness, When they think the sin they fall into, doth presently cause an enmity between God and them. Object. What need Believers</i>	leavers

THE CONTENTS.

	Page
leavers then be careful to avoid sin? Answered.	2
Weakness, Judging Gods works as enmity against them	123
Chap. 26. We may loose the assurance of our Peace with God by our sinful walking.	133
Chap. 27. Use, 6. Give God the glory of our Reconciliation.	135
Chap. 28. Use, 7. To love Christ, And do or suffer for him.	137
Chap. 29. Use, 8. In Seeking Reconciliation by Christ.	140
Chap. 30. God [was] reconciling the world to himself from all eternity, opened.	141
Chap. 31. The of work our Reconciliation with God in Christ hath been a doing from all eternity.	146
Chap. 32. Five Uses of the former Doctrine.	153
Chap. 33. Of Gods Reconciling the world to himself.	158
Chap. 34. Gods reconciling [the World] to himself, cannot be meant of every individual man; proved by scripture: And Three Reasons.	160
Chap. 35. Why Gods Reconciling to himself is expressed in so large a terme as the [World.] Six Reasons thereof.	163
Chap. 36. Use, 1, Seeing God hath excepted none from Mercy, let none except themselves.	168
Chap, 37, Use, 2.	170
Chap, 38, Not imputing their trespasses; Opened And 3. Notes on the text.	172
Chap, 39, The Ministers Commission, to Preach Reconciliation to the World.	251
Chap. 40. Why God chose Men rather than Angels to dispence the Mystery of Reconciliation. The Reasons thereof,	259
Chap, 41, Why God wil not himself immediately dispute this Gospel Reconciliation.	264

THE CONTENTS.

	Page
Chap, 42, Use, 1, The sending of the Ministers of the Gospel is to be accounted a glorious blessing,	267
Chap, 43, Use, 2. The Great honor of Ministers that are Faithful.	268
Chap, 44,	272
Chap, 45, Verse, 20. Opened, and Five Doctrines propounded.	278
Chap, 46. The Ministers of the Gospel Are Embassadors of Christ, Opened in six particulars.	280
Chap. 47, Use, 1.	283
Chap, 48, The second Doctrine, (Propounded in the 45, Chapter) prosecuted.	284
Chap, 49, The Second Doctrine (propounded in the 45, Chapter) further prosecuted.	288
Chap. 50, Use 1. Answering the Objections of the Arminians. And the Wantons of our Age,	291
Chap 51, Use, 2, Ministers ought to speak as the Oracles of God. The manner of their preaching Opened.	293
Chap, 52, How to know what kind of Ministry God speaks most in.	299
Chap, 53. Use, 3, We should delight in the Word.	301
Chap, 54, Use, 4. If God and Christ speak in the word, how dreadful ought it to be to the Neglectors, Disobayers, and Contemners of the word?	303
Chap, 55, How we ought to have the word.	307
Chap, 56. The third Doctrine (propounded in the 45, Chapter) prosecuted, Viz, The excellency of the Gospel make the Ministers earnest in their Ministration,	309
Chap, 57, Reasons of Faithful Ministers earnestness, 1, their love to God, 2, their love to Jesus	

THE CONTENTS.

	Page
Jesus Christ; 3, their love to their souls to whom they Preach, 4, a kind of love to themselves,	311
Chap, 58, Use, 1, The horrible wickedness of those that are idle in the Ministry.	315
Chap, 59, Use, 2,	316
Chap, 60, The fourth Doctrine (propounded in the 45, Chapter) viz, That God and Christ are exceeding willing and desirous to be reconciled to sinners.	317
Chap. 61, The First Argument: Manifesting the exceeding willingness of God to be reconciled to sinners.	318
Chap, 62 The Second Argument: Manifesting the exceeding willingness of God and Christ to be reconciled to sinners.	319
Chap, 63, The third Argument: Manifesting the exceeding willingness of God and Christ to be Reconciled to sinners.	320
Chap, 64, The fourth Argument: Manifesting the exceeding willingness of God and Christ to be reconciled to sinners.	321
Chap 65, The Fifth Argument: Manifesting the exceeding willingness of God and Christ to be reconciled to sinners.	322
Chap, 66, The Sixth Argument: Manifesting the exceeding willingness of God and Christ to be reconciled to sinners.	323
Chap, 67, The Seventh Argument: Manifesting the exceeding willingness of God and Christ to be reconciled to sinners,	325
Chap, 68, The Eighth Argument: Manifesting the exceeding willingness of God to be reconciled to sinners,	326
Chap, 69 The Ninth Argument: Manifesting the exceeding willingness of God to be reconciled to sinners	

THE CONTENTS.

sinners,	327
Chap. 70, The tenth argument: Manifesting the exceeding willingness of God and Christ to be reconciled to sinners.	329
Chap. 71, The eleventh argument: Manifesting the exceeding willingness of God and Christ to be reconciled to sinners.	333
Chap. 72, The twelfth argument: Manifesting the exceeding willingness of God and Christ to be reconciled to Sinners.	335
Chap. 73, The thirteenth argument: Manifesting the exceeding willingness of God to be reconciled to Sinners,	340
Chap. 74, The Fourteenth argument: Manifesting the exceeding willingness of God to be reconciled to sinners	341
Chap. 75, The fifteenth argument: Manifesting the exceeding willingness of God to be reconciled to sinners	344
Chap. 76. The sixteenth argument: Manifesting the exceeding willingness of God to be reconciled to sinners.	346
Chap. 77, Christs willingness to be reconciled to Sinners, further opened	350
Chap. 78 Objections answered concerning the willingness of God and Christ to be reconciled to sinners.	
Chap. 79. Use, 1, Admire Gods infinite Grace in entreating to be reconciled to Sinners, Considering. 1. What it is God intreats for. 2. Who are intreated. 3. By whom you are intreated. 4, What need hath God of you?	364
Chap. 80, Use, 2, and 3.	366
Chap. 81, Use, 4, To strengthen our Faith; if God were reconciled when we were enemies, he will not cast us off for every infirmity. Objections Answered.	368



GOSPEL

RECONCILIATION,

OR

Christs Trumpet of Peace

TO THE

WORLD.

2 Cor. 5. 19, 20.
To witt; that God was in Christ reconciling
the world unto himself, nor imputing their
trespasses unto them, and hath committed
unto vs the word of Reconciliation. Now
then we as Ambassadors for Christ, as
though God did beseech you by us; we pray you
in Christs stead, be yee Reconciled unto
God.

CHAP. I.
HIS Apottle Paul who was the Pen-man
of this, and the former Epistle, was a cho-
sen vessel to bear the name of Christ in the
World; a glorious instrument to publish
the grace of God in Jesus Christ: One of
the most famous Ambassadors that ever
was upon the earth; One that honoured Jesus Christ

D

as



as much as ever man did that we either ever read of, or ever heard of; all his care was to Magnifie, yea indeed to Om-nifie Jesus Christ; the very name of Christ was as sugar in his mouth, and rolled up and down under his tongue; He himself had tasted upon his spirit much of the sweet-nesse of the grace of God in Christ; and he labors much to make this known unto others, that they might likewise experience the sweetnesse thereof. And in these two verses there is as much set forth of the grace of God in the Gospel as I know in any two verses together in all the Book of God.

We have here set out unto us.

1. The Doctrine of Reconciliation between God, and man.

2. The Apostles Commission for to declare this Do-ctrine of Reconciliation.

3. The Faithful discharge of this his Commission. The first two are in the 19. verse. And the third is in the 20. verse.

As for this 19. verse we heave here, First the Do-ctrine of Reconciliation: to wit; *That God was in Christ Reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses to them.* And in that you have these Two things.

First, the Doctrine of Reconciliation set down more generally; Namely; *that God was in Christ Recon-ciling the world to himself.*

Secondly, An instance in one special great work of God, *in Reconciling the world unto himself.*

We shal make an entrance into the first of these and so proceed; namely, The Doctrine of Reconciliation set down more generally. *That God was in Christ re-conciling the world to himself.*

This word *reconciling*, Reconciliation, Notes and implies; that there was a formal breach between God, and us: we cannot understand what it is to be Reconciled, except we do beforehand know somewhat about the Breach

Breach which this Reconciliation must make up. It doth imple an enmity that there was between man and God; for if two be reconciled, then certainly, it implies, that once there was an enmity between them. *Conciliari* is to bring into favor, but *Reconciliari*, is to bring into favor again those that have bin in favor before, and between whom there hath been a Breach; therefore to *bring into feavor again*; is in playn tearms, *Reconciliati-on*. And in the opening of this doctrine therfore, there are these particulars that playnly lie before us in the Text; for I wil go no further in the opening of the Doctrine of Reconciliation but meerly to that which you have lying obviously, and plainly before you in the words. In which you have these Particulars.

First, *That which is implied; namely, That there was a blessed Union at the first between God and Man, but this was broken, and there was an enmity after that union between God and Man. I put these Two together; namely that after the first union that was between God and Man, there was an enmity between God and Man.*

Secondly, *There is yet a way to have this Breach made up; there is a possibillity for man that is at enmity with God, to be Reconciled.*

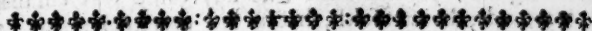
Thirdly, *We shal open to you, wherein this Reconciliation doth consist; what that Reconciliation is which the text speaks of, and which the Gospel doth tender unto us.*

Fourthly, We shal shew the principal cause of this, how this Reconciliation did begin. It was God himself that did begin with us, we did not begin with him to make peace, God did first begin with us, or there would never have peace been made between him and Man.

Fifthly, We shal shew in whom this Reconciliation is made; it is in Jesus Christ; which indeed is the principal thing of all; and that wherein the mystery of the Gospel lies: and when we come to that, we shal open the Mystery of this Reconciliation. And then,

Sixthly, Further from what time this Reconciliation hath been. It [was] saith the Text God [was] in Christ; it was not only made at the present; but there was a work between God and Christ concerning the Reconciliation of man from all eternity.

Seventhly, Whose they are here that are said to be reconciled; that is; the [World] to wit, that God was in Christ Reconciling the world to himself.



CHAP. 2.

*That there was a breach made between God and man
after a blessed Union*

IN the first Chapter we have much work cut out. Some of the particulars I wil pass over very briefly, for my scope and drift is to open to you the Evangelical part of this Text, and to insist specially upon what is plainly expressed, rather than to insist on what is implied. But because we cannot treat of what is expressed without treating a little of what is implied: Therefore in a few lines of that, and so pass on.

1 That which is implied, is, That there is a Breach made between God and us after Union (I put these two together) There was at first a blessed union between God and man-kind; God did make man in a happy estate according to his own Image, that is, in perfect holiness, and righteousness. When he had made al other Creatures, he makes man as his chosen Creature, stamps upon him his own image, to the end that he might by man have his glory from al the other Creatures that were made, that he might in this world have a creature which might be able to know him, and to worship him, and to serve him, and to take notice of the lustre of his glory that arose from al his other works, and to reflect this glory upon his face: and he made man a Creature fit to do this work. Man was very happy in his first creation in this thing, that God made him of al his creature fit for such a business to reflect his own glory upon his own face, and so to enjoy communion with himself, which no creature in the world, except the Angels which were in Heaven, were capable of. And the Lord loved this creature, and took delight in him, therefore it is observable in that 1. Gen. the last, that though when he beheld al his other works, he only said that they were

were good; yet when the sixth day came wherein man was made, the text saith, that he saw every thing that he had made, and behold it was

Every particular Creature was good taken by it self, good as from God, good in their qualities & effects, without any, either guilt or hurt. But now taken altogether are very good, especially seeing man was made who is the most excellent of all Gods visible works in the morning of his creation

very good: observe it, it is never said very good, till the last day, till man is made; there is not this Commendation of the works of God mentioned till he had made man; and the reason is indeed, because the Lord did not take so much delight in all the works he had made in this world, untill he

had made man, man was the very complement of all the excellencies of Gods works; for indeed he was the End of all his works, he made all the other for man, and man for himself. God hath not his glory, I meane not immediatly from al his other works in the world, but only through man, and had it not been for man, he had lost the greatest part of his glory in the rest of his works; his glory passeth from all the works that he made, unto him through man. Now therefore though the works that God made, the Heaven, the Earth, and the Seas, and the like, were good in themselves; yet, what glory could God have had in all these? he could have no Communion with these Creatures after they were made, and these Creatures could have no communion with him; none of them could know God, or take any notice of God, or praise God actively. God is a pure act, and he is not content with having his glory passively, but he must have his glory actively: It is true, al his Creatures were made as an instrument in tune; but there was none to play upon it; and though there be never so much of the glory of God in all the Creatures in the world, yet if man had not been made, none could have founded forth this glory of God; those Creatures had been Dumb in that respect, like an instrument that cannot of it self sound forth any musick unlesse there were some to play upon it: and

and so it is here, God had made all other Creatures very good, and there was in them matter of Gods praise; but now, to the end that this praise and glory of God may be founded forth, he brings in man, and he gives him skil to praise the name of God in all these Creatures; and in this God delighted very much.

Thus there was a most blessed union, and a wonderful delight between God and Man at first; but the truth is, this union was soone broken, and man in a smal time, did come to be (next to the Devills) the most deadly enemy that God had, though there was a most blessed union between God and man at first; so that *Adam* could walk, and Converse with God, as he did for a while; yet *Adam* sins against God and turns a most desperate enemy against God; even he himself, and all his posterity; therefore you shal observe in the story where the fall of man is set forth; that as soon as *Adam* had sinned, the voice of God which he did but hear in the Garden, became terrible to him; and he presently seekes to hide himself; he was Conscious to himself that he had made God his enemy and he lookes upon God as his enemy, and so flies from him, as from his enemy; O what a change was here of mans condition! what a sad thing was this; that God who had no Creature in all the world to know him, and feare him, and serve him, and love him, and in whom he could delight, and have Communion, but only man, and that that man should presently turn rebel, and enemy unto God; such an enemy as God looks upon him, as one having a most opposite nature unto him; and man looks upon God, as an enemy to him, and flies from him as from an enemy; so that God was faine as it wereto call after him; *Adam* where art thou? This is the woeful fruit of sin, even of the first sin; of the fall of our first Parents; and since the world began, since that very time, this man, this *Adam* hath begotten none but enemies unto God; and if there be any truth in the word of God, this is certaine, That there was never any Child of *Adam* but was born an enemy

enemy unto God; the Scripture is as Cleere in this, as in any thing; I might name abundance of texts for it, which for brevity sake I shal omit. Rom. 5. 10. *When we were enemies, we were Reconciled unto God*: Certainly if any men in the world were not enemies unto God, they are those that are Reconciled afterward; but the Apostle speakes of himself and of all other Christians that are Reconciled unto God; he saith, that they were enemies unto him: this may be said of every man child in the world; that he is an enemy unto God; and such enemies are every one of us unto God naturally, as that there is an antipathy between our hearts and him; and the enmity of antipathy is the greatest; it is not an enmity occasioned by some ill carriage in one act: as for example: Two men, though they were great freinds before, yet there may be some miscarriage between them, that they may be as enemies for a while; but that is not all: the enmity that is on mans part against God, is in his very nature. It is true, there was a sinful act brought it in first, and made a breach between God and man; but that is not all, it went further, there was by this sin begotten in the heart of man an antipathy, a natural antipathy between him, and God; so that the poyson of a Toad in the Body of a man is not more opposite, and there is not a greater enmity to the nature of man, than the nature of man is opposite, and an enemy unto God himself. Two sheep may fight one against another by occasion and be as enemies one with another; but two sheep can never be at enmity one with another, as the Wolfe and the Lamb are, for their enmity is natural; their natures are opposite one to another: So the heart of man is opposite unto God even naturally. And know this: that there is in mans nature not only a hatred of God, but a deadly hatred. Perhaps you may think you are free from this; but Certainly, this is in every one of your hearts naturally, even

in those that have the best natures in the world, as you call them : there is in their hearts a hatred ; nay, a deadly hatred against God. But you will say, God forbid : what, hate God ? Se that Scripture in *Rom. 1.* Where when the Apostle reckons up the evil of those that were in their natural Condition, verse 13. he saith, that they were haters of God : and what the Apostle there speaks of them, he intendeth of all, for that is his scope in that place to shew our natural condition, and that therefore we cannot be justified by any works of our own, but it must be by faith in Christ, because we are by nature haters of God. And in the second Commandment ye have that expressed, even of those that seem to be the greatest lovers of God, that would be thought to love God more than any people, that will devise pictures to worship God by ; and bestow much cost upon them, and they saie, it is for the honour of God, and who would not think but that these men loved God exceedingly ; yet though these men may be thought to be Lovers of God ; there is no Commandment in which the breakers of it are said to be haters of God, but in that Commandment ; he will visit the iniquity of the Fathers upon the Children unto third, and fourth, generation of them that hate him ; that is, upon those that howsoever they ; pretend love unto him in their false worship, yet they hate him. So that certainly there is a hatred, yea, deadly hatred in the heart of man by nature against God. But you will say : how doth that appeare : or wherein doth the deadly hatred of God consist ? In this. When one man hates another so as he would wish him dead, he would wish him out of the way : he would wish him that he were not : such a kind of hatred is there in every mans heart naturally : which I make plaine, thus. The very nature of God is holyness it self : and if God should be less holy than he is, he should loose his very Being : or if God should be less just than he is, he would loose his life, and cease to be. Now I put this question to you, to you that are
E wicked

wicked men, that are unconverted, have you not sometimes a secret wish in your hearts, that God were not so holy as he is; could you not wish in your hearts that God were not so just as he is; that he did not hate Sin as he doth; and why would you not have God so holy, and so just as he is? even because you might have the more liberty in your way of sin; that you might have more freedom in fulfilling the lust of the flesh; is not this in your hearts oftentimes; see then what it comes to, it is as much as if he should say? my heart is so set upon such, and such a lust, that I had rather God should cease to be God, than I should not have liberty to enjoy that lust; this is the very plaine english of it; though you do not come to that height to say so, in so many words, for I suppose none of you to be so abominably wicked, or that ever came to that height of impiety, as to say plainly with your mouths, I love such a lust so dearly, that I would rather God should not be God, than I loose my lust. But you are to know that there is a language in your actions, as well as in your words; & God can understand the language of your actions, as well as the expressions of your mouths. Now, it is apparent that when a man loves his lust so well, as that to the end he may have the more liberty for the enjoyment of it, he could secretly wish that God were not so infinitely holy, and just as he is; certainly there is this in it; that he doth in effect desire, and wish that God might rather cease to bee, then that he might not have his lust; and is not this a deadly hatred? thou dost so far love thy lust, as that thou hast a deadly hatred against God, whose holyness, and justice thou knowest to be so infinite, as that they are both set against it; and therefore for the better enjoyment of thy lust, thou couldest wish, that God were neither so holy, nor so just as he is; which is in effect to wish that he were not God. For if he should cease to be holy or less holy, & less just than he is, he should cease to be God. And truly if we rightly understood our own natures in this particular

cular; there is nothing will break the heart of a man more than it: what can break the heart of a man more, than to sit down and consider; I am an enemy unto God; and I have been in enmity against God almy dayes, and therefore what can I expect, but that God should be an enemy unto me everlastingly. This is that which will strike down the proudest heart in the world. And let me tel you; till you come to see sin thus, you do not see it to any purpose. But though this argument may take up my treatise, yet because I mention it to make way to that which remaines, and which I principally ayme at in the doctrine of Reconciliation: I shal therefore pass it over.



CHAP. 3.

*That there is a way to make up a Peace between
God and Sinful Man.*

II. Would it not now be joyful news to you to hear of a possibility for God to be Reconciled to you? You see there is an enmity in your hearts to God; and not only an enmity; but a most deadly, and desperate one. I could shew you abundance of particulars of this enmity, but the maine thing that I ayme at, is, only to open the Doctrine of Reconciliation: therefore if thou apprehendest this truth of God; and if God hath darted it into thy Conscience: wil not the Doctrine of Reconciliation be acceptable to thee? O! it would; and it is unto those that feare God, and rightly apprehend themselves as enemies unto him. But I fear, least while I am treating of the Doctrine of Reconciliation between God you, you should not apprehend the excellency of it, and not relish it in the sweetness of it. And therefore if I have said any thing that seems to be terrible to you in my other treatises. If I have shewed to you what an evil, and dangerous Condition you are in naturally,

and how liable to the wrath of God, and to the torments of Hel, where the worme dies not, & the fier goes not out; it is al to this end; that you might the better relish the blessed, and sweet doctrine of Reconciliation between God, and your Souls. This is that then which we shall begin withal, as the first sound of the blessed Silver Trumpet of the Gospel; namely;

Doct. That there is a way to make up a peace between God and sinful man. God hath not left mankind, who hath sunk himself into such a depth of misery, I say, God hath not left them irrecoverable irreconcilable: the Lord doth here professe unto you, that he is willing to be reconciled unto you; yea, we shal see afterward, that he doth inreat you to be reconciled. But here is the first sound of the Trumpet of the Gospel, and blessed are they that hear this joyfull sound: namely, that there is a possibility of being reconciled; that the Lord is content to enter into parly with his enemies, for God might have cast them off forever, and never so much as parly with them, as he hath done the Angels that sinned, against whom he was so provoked, that he resolved within himself, and he hath kept his resolution since the beginning of the world, and he will keep it unto all eternity, that he wil not so much as enter into parly with those Creatures, or be reconciled with them upon any terms. As when a man is so fallen out with an another, as that if one should come to speak about terms of peace, he cannot endure to hear of them; no, saith he, I will never enter into treaty with him so long as I live, about it. So God wil never enter into treaty with the Angels, he wil not hear of any terms of Reconciliation, but is resolved to revenge himself upon them to al eternity: therefore the Apostle saith, they are reserved in chains to the judgmtnt of the great day. But now, Lord what shal become of man? poor man might well fear, when he hears what God hath resolved upon against the Angels, he hath cause enough to shake
at

at that, for indeed man is a far more poore, and mean, and wretched Creature than those Angels are. If it be so between man, and man, that when a great Prince is offended with some Noble man in his Court, and so offended with him, yea, for his first offence, as that all the men in the world cannot perswade that Prince so much as to vouchsafe to hearken to any terms of reconciliation, and if some meaner officer, some poore Groom shal have offended the King, and provoked his wrath, and hears of this, that his Cheif favorite, one that was neer unto him; that was alwaies in his presence did but offend him once, and yet the King should never hearken to any means of pacification: surely this man would soon think with himself, Lord what wil become of me, ? Is there any hope that there shal be a parly between the King and me ? Certainly this poor man wil even be ready to have his heart sink within him, and sit down altogether overwhelmed with fear, and dispaire. And so indeed should we all have done upon our reasoning within our selves concerning Gods dealing with the fallen Angels, had we not had this glorious, and blessed sound of the Gospel, and hopes of Reconciliation with God through Jesus Christ, we would all have sunk down into the barmlesse Gulf of dispaire, and concluded certainly against our selves, that there can be no peace between God and us, we being such enemies unto him as we are by nature. But though this be beyond our thoughts as far as the Heaven is above the Earth; and though this could never enter into the heart of man, that ever God would parly with poor fallen man after so great an enmity begot by sin; yet know, this is the message that is come from Heaven, even from God himself, that he is contented to parly with you; yea, so Contented, as that he himself hath sent ambassadors to us to intreat us be reconciled. But of that hereafter. God May is Content to enter into treaty with man concerning

a

and how liable to the wrath of God, and to the torments of Hell, where the worme dies not, & the fier goes not out; it is al to this end; that you might the better relish the blessed, and sweet doctrine of Reconciliation between God, and your Souls. This is that then which we shall begin withal, as the first sound of the blessed Silver Trumpet of the Gospel; namely;

Doct. That there is a way to make up a peace between God and sinful man. God hath not left mankind, who hath sunk himself into such a depth of misery, I say, God hath not left them irrecoverable irreconcilable: the Lord doth here professe unto you, that he is willing to be reconciled unto you; yea, we shal see afterward, that he doth intreat you to be reconciled. But here is the first sound of the Trumpet of the Gospel, and blessed are they that hear this joyfull sound: namely, that there is a possibility of being reconciled; that the Lord is content to enter into parly with his enemies, for God might have cast them off forever, and never so much as parly with them, as he hath done the Angels that sinned, against whom he was so provoked, that he resolved within himself, and he hath kept his resolution since the beginning of the world, and he will keep it unto all eternity, that he wil not so much as enter into parly with those Creatures, or be reconciled with them upon any terms. As when a man is so fallen out with an another, as that if one should come to speak about terms of peace, he cannot endure to hear of them; no, saith he, I will never enter into treaty with him so long as I live, about it. So God wil never enter into treaty with the Angels, he wil not hear of any terms of Reconciliation, but is resolved to revenge himself upon them to al eternity: therefore the Apostle saith, they are reserved in chains to the judgment of the great day. But now, Lord what shal become of man? poor man might well fear, when he hears what God hath resolved upon against the Angels, he hath cause enough to shake
at

at that, for indeed man is a far more poore, and mean, and wretched Creature than those Angels are. If it be so between man, and man, that when a great Prince is offended with some Noble man in his Court, and so offended with him, yea, for his first offence, as that all the men in the world cannot perswade that Prince so much as to vouchsafe to hearken to any terms of reconciliation, and if some meaner officer, some poore Groom shal have offended the King, and provoked his wrath, and hears of this, that his Cheif favorite, one that was neer unto him; that was alwaies in his presence did but offend him once, and yet the King should never hearken to any means of pacification: surely this man would soon think with himself, Lord what wil become of me,? Is there any hope that there shal be a parly between the King and me? Certainly this poor man wil even be ready to have his heart sink within him, and sit down altogether overwhelmed with fear, and dispaire. And so indeed should we all have done upon our reasoning within our selves concerning Gods dealing with the fallen Angels, had we not had this glorious, and blessed sound of the Gospel, and hopes of Reconciliation with God through Jesus Christ, we would all have sunk down into the battomlesse Gulf of dispaire, and concluded certainly against our selves, that there can be no peace between God and us, we being such enemies unto him as we are by nature. But though this be beyond our thoughts as farr as the Heaven is above the Earth; and though this could never enter into the heart of man, that ever God would parly with poor fallen man after so great an enmity begot by sin; yet know, this is the message that is come from Heaven, even from God himself, that he is contented to parly with you; yea, so Contented, as that he himself hath sent ambassadors to us to intreat us be reconciled. But of that hereafter. God I say is Content to enter into treaty with man concerning

a

a Reconciliation and the making up of a peace between him, and their souls; for that indeed is the very scope of the Gospel. If I should a little dwell here to inquire the Reason of this, why the Lord should be willing to enter into this treaty with man-kind: the truth is, it is an unsearchable depth, we cannot imagine any Reason why the Lord should rather chuse to parly with us, and to treat concerning terms of peace with us than with the Angels. There is something indeed which we may have in our thoughts; As thus. If God did not Reconcile himself to man, and save him, he should loose his whole Creature; he did not loose all the Angels when they fell, but if God should not provide a way to be Reconciled to man, the whole kind of that Creature would be utterly lost: now the Lord wil not cast away the whole kind of such an excellent Creature as man is. But the truth is, these are but guesses at this Reason in chusing to treat with us about salvation, and not with the Angels. But the main thing is: God hath waies to glorifie himself that we know not of in reconciling himself to man-kind. We know this, that there are glorious intentions that God hath in this work, but what these are, we shal never know thoroughly til we come to Heaven; and that indeed wil be the very work of Heaven it self to be praising of God to all eternity for that great act of his, namely his willingness to be reconciled to lost man, rather than to the fallen Angels. We shal know some Reasons of that afterward, for God doth things according to the Counsel of his wil; and there is nothing he doth, but he hath a great deal of Reason for which we must adore though we cannot now fully understand. Only for the present let me hint this unto you; let the Consideration of but thus much affect your hearts. O should we be sent to preach to the Devils such a point as this is, or to the Angels in Hell; and say, the Lord hath kept this Counsel from you almost this six thousand years

years, and his waies towards you have been so as if he would never enter parly with you, but now God hath revealed his wil towards you, that he is content to enter into a Treaty with you about the things that concern your peace, and the reconciling of you unto himself, what a message would this be to them think you? but this never was, nor never shal be preached unto them. If God should send this message to the damned in Hel, and say to them, the Lord is content to enter into a parly with you about the reconciling of himself unto you, what a message would this be to them? but this cannot be; this is only a message to those that are alive here in this world, to that part of the children of men that are living upon the earth, unto them only can this be preached, that there is a possibility of Reconciliation between God and them. Truly the consideration of a possibility is that which may satisfie the heart of man, let the terms be what they wil. O! is it possible that God may be reconciled, I wil never inquire about the terms out of fear that the hardnesse of them should discourage me: O! let the terms be what they will, this is the most acceptable news, this is the best tidings to my soul, more acceptable than if I were told, that I had a thousand worlds given unto me, even this that I hear, that there is a possibility of reconciliation betwixt God and my self. This may serve to be some prop to support, and keep up any troubled Conscience from despair, even the very reading of this, though still they are afraid of Gods willingness to make up the peace, but it is possible thou may'st have it. No Angel in Heaven, Nor man in the world, do, or can know to the contrary, but that it is possible for thee, and thee, for such a sinner as thou art, or such as thou art to come to be reconciled.

And doth this begin a little to stir thy heart, but to read that the Condition of man is not desperate, but there is a possibility of his being Reconciled: do'st thou beleive

believe because of this? then (as Christ said unto *Nathaniel*) thou shalt see greater things than these. So, if thy heart begin to be affected by this: thou shalt before we have done with this subject, read greater things of the counsel of God about his willingness to be reconciled unto the Children of men.

Only before I pass let me speak this one word about this point. Let us take heed that we do not turne this grace of God that we hear of this day, to the increase of our more fearful condemnation, or make our condemnation far more dreadful then the condemnation of the Devils is, because we have more means afforded us for our delivery than ever they had, for if we look not to it, it may prove so, that our condemnation may be more dreadful then the condemnation of the Devils; and therefore you had need, when you hear anything of this Doctrine of Reconciliation, or of a possibility of being reconciled unto God, to lift up your hearts unto God, and desire that the reading of this blessed Doctrine may not prove to the increase of your condemnation. There is not such a thing preached to the Devils; therefore if I come not in, and accept of the terms, of Reconciliation, I shall be in worse case than the Devils. It can never be charged upon them, that God was willing to be reconciled, and they would not; but it may be thus said of all wicked and ungodly men, that live under the sound of the Gospel, and so Continue in their wickedness, and die in it: this will be the charge that will lie upon them another day; and God will saie unto them; you did indeed hear that you were naturally enemies to me; yet I manifested in my Gospel, that I would enter into terms of peace with you, but you refused it, and slighted it, and scorned it. What can possibly provoke the heart of a man so much as this, that when he hath his enemy who hath deeply offended him, at an advantage, should yet offer terms of peace to him; and yet his enemy goes away scornning, slighting and contemning him. Truly, thus do wicked

wicked men that live under the light of the Gospel; when the Ministers of the Gospel come, and preach peace and Reconciliation to them; tel them, that God is willing to be at peace with them, that he is willing to treat, and to parly with them about the business of saluation; they go away, and the language of their actions is this; wel, we will shift as well as we can for our selves, we are resolved to have our waies of sin, and to have our Satisfaction in this, and the other lust. Now God forbid that this should be in the heart of any one that casts his eyes on this book.

CHAP. 4.

Reconciliation Opened, 1 By it Gods enmity is taken away. 2 The enmity on the souls part is taken away. 3 God taketh into intire Love. 4 By it thou comest to be in League and Covenant with God. 5. The soul is perfectly Reconciled. 6. This Reconciliation its everlasting. 7. It continues notwithstanding all thy sins. 8. The Devills Accusations shall never make God thy Enemy again.

III. Therefore I am in the third place to open a little further this grace of God, the doctrine of Reconciliation, and it is a most blessed, and sweet doctrine, especially in these times wherein there are so many Cumbustions abroad in the world, wherein we heare of Warrs and rumors of Wars, yea, of Wars neer to us, even in our own land, our bowels, what can be more acceptable in such times as these, than to hear of Reconciliation; Now when things are grown to such a height, when there is such a deadly hatred (for let me tel you, there was never such a deadly hatred in a Nation between one party and another, as there is now) it is boyled up to the highest; as poyson, may be boyled up to such a height, as that it may be death to touch it: so the poyson, and rage of our adversaries is boyled up to the



greatest height. But though we are not able to Conceive that there can be a Reconciliation between them and us, yet there may be a possibility of a Reconciliation between God and us, and the hearing of the Doctrine of Reconciliation, may quiet, and support our hearts against the feare, and trouble that we have in these times, wherein we have nothing but rumors of wars round about us yea in the midst of all these miseries which we hear of, as the effect of these unnatural broyles that are amongst us.

Now the Doctrine, it may be opened in these several particulars.

The first is this. That enmity which we have heard of before, when once God comes to be Reconciled to a soul, is all done away; all that enmity, is then so removed, as that the wayes of the Lord to a man are turned quite contrary to that they have formerly been; which I shal afterwards discover in the effect of this Reconciliation more fully. But this is the first thing; the doing away of all that wrath, and displeasure that was in the heart of God against the sinner; so that if it were possible that you could but look into the heart of God, you should not see any remainder of that wrath, and displeasure that was in him, because of sin. It is true, if we do consider of God in all his workings together, from Election to glorification; it will be hard to affirme, that ever God should be in a way of enmity against his Elect ones, because he did alwaies love them; for the truth is; though we conceive Gods works by peeces, yet they are all one in him; but if we would understand God aright, we must understand him in relation to his Creature, and in relation unto himself; for as God is in himself, it is impossible for us to understand him: but, we must understand him in reference to his Creatures; there we find, that one excellency of God is cut into several peeces, and parts; and that one act of God, which is his own being is discovered in several waies of acting.

There

There are a great many mistakes about God when as men do draw Consequences from what God is in himself, to bring them to what God is in relation to his Creature; and because they cannot reconcile these two; namely, what God is infinitely in himself, (which is above our apprehension) and what God is in his manifestation to the Creature, not being able to reconcile those Two, they draw most absurd, and vile Consequences from God. Sometimes they look upon God in himself, and sometimes upon God as he is to the Creature, and not being able to distinguish, they mistake the waies of God exceedingly. As thus: If you would look upon God as he is in himself, there are not two Attributes in his Essence: that which we call *Mercy*, and that which we call *Iustice*, is one and the same in God. That which we call *Love*, and that which we call *Hatred*, in God is al one, but in us they are two things: In man, Justice is one thing, and power, is another thing, and patience is another thing, and love is another thing; but in God, al these are but one infinite Essence. And so for actions, sometimes we conceive of God acting one way, and then another way. First, acting in the way of his wrath, and then in the way of his love; but God himself is one pure act, and when we look upon God in himself, we can see him but absolutely one in his own nature, there is no such Attributes as we speak of, it is but onely according to mans Capacity, and according to the severall waies of the manifestation of Gods own infinite Essence, and of the severall actions of God. But when we look upon God in reference to the Creature, we see God as it were divided. As for example: when the Sun shines, and the Beames thereof appear, if you put a green, or a blew, or a red glasse between your eye and it, then the reflection will be blew, or green, or red, according to the coler of the glasse; yet in the mean time, the Beams of the Sun are al one: then take the same glasse that is blew, if you can but make it green, the shining of the Sun will be green to, all the variety is

in the glasse, not in the Sun. So God is the same forever; but according to the severall Conditions men are in, so are the workings of God towards that Creature. As now; man in the state of innocency, he was as it were a white cleer glasse, and God shined there in a way of goodnesse, and love to man: the same man fals, and is dyed red by his sin; let him be now presented unto God, then the waies of God are bloody, and shew full of wrath. Let this man again be converted unto God and now the glasse is changed and God representeth himself another way, but still the same God; only according to the severall waies of the Creature, so are his severall actings. Therefore those that wil go to speak of God as he is in himself, who is but one act, they are apt to lead you into abundance of errors, because they are not able to mannage their apprehensions of him as he is in himself; therefore they draw such ill Consequences from God. They wil tel you that God is unchangeable, how then can you be under the wrath of God, when he loves you from all eternity? Yes; The same God that can look upon the Creature in one Consideration with love; he may look upon the same Creature in another Consideration with hatred. *We Converters*, (saith the Apostle) *were the Children of wrath as well as others by nature*; in that respect there was no difference between us, and others. I will but put this to these men: Was not there a time when Jesus Christ was under Gods wrath? yet God loved his Son from all eternity, he alwaies loved him; yet, there was a time when he was under the wrath of God; that is, Christ being presented unto God with our nature, with our sins, Gods ways towards him was (as we may say) in a red way: so we may understand, that even those that are elect, God loving of them from all eternity, they may yet be in a state of enmity unto God, he working upon the Creature according to the severall Considerations of it; so that while he is walking contrary unto God, God is also walking contrary unto him. So that thus you see what this

this Reconciliation is. This enmity is taken away; that is, whereas before God did shine upon them through a red reflection; now that is gone, and he shines upon them through a white glass; this dreadful wrath of his that is out against them, and that Contrariety of God in his waies against them is quite taken away. This is the first.

Secondly, The Second thing in reconciliation is this: not only the enmity that is in God is done away; but the Lord also doth take away the enmity on the souls part; that is, Thou comest by vertue of this Reconciliation to be so overpowred by the spirit of God, as that thou hast a heart in amity with God; at least that natural crosness and perverseness of thy heart against God whereby thou dost hate God and that which is holy and spiritual, is taken away, and thou hast a frameable spirit, framed by God, and made willing to come in and submit, and yeild thy self unto God: God puts a Reconcilable spirit into thee, as he himself hath a Reconcilable spirit towards thee.

Thirdly, Further, in the third place: There is a receiving into intire love: not only a ceasing of the wrath, and of the enmity that is in God against thee, and a taking away of the enmity that is in thee against God: but there is a receiving into intire love, and that mutually, God receiveth thee into the love of a friend, and thou receivest God into the love of a friend too, so that there was never such an intire friendship between one friend and another after peace hath been made between them, as there is now between God and thy soul. And this is more than barely to be pacified, for men who were at enmity one with another may possibly come to have the fierceness of their enmity taken away, yea they may come to be so far Reconciled, as that they wil never do one another hurt, they wil never fight the one against the other as formerly they did: But yet perhaps for all this, they wil never come to be intirely loving one to another.

another: it may be they will live as strangers one towards another. But when ever the soul comes to be Reconciled to God, there is a through Reconciliation, the enmity is not only taken away, but there is an intire love between God and the soul, thou art made a friend unto God, and God is become a friend unto thee. Yea.

Fourthly, In the fourth place, there is this in Reconciliation likewise. Thou comest now to be in league with God, God and thee come to shake hands one with another, yea, more than shake hands; thou comest to be one of his own people, God takes thee into an everlasting Covenant with himself, and thou takest him to be thy God in an everlasting Covenant likewise. As when Princes have War one against another, there may be a peace made, and they may lay down reasons on both sides, but at this while they may not come in to a league of friendship, and amity one with another. But God is so Reconciled to a soul, as that he entereth into a League with the soul, entereth into Covenant.

Fifthly, The Lord when he is Reconciled to a soul, he is perfectly Reconciled, we may give it that word, for the truth is, it is such a Reconciliation, so perfect, as that there shal not remain the least grudge in the heart of God towards a man Reconciled. It is true, on our side it is not so perfect, but on Gods side it is so perfect a Reconciliation as that there shal not remaine the least grudge in the heart of God against the Creature for any hurt to the Creature.

Sixtly, Yea, such is the Reconciliation, as that it is everlasting, such a Reconciliation, as there shal never be breach made more, such a Reconciliation, as there shal never be a falling out more. And where was there ever such a peace made between one man and another? when was ever one man so Reconciled unto another, as that a man may say, wel, these two are thus, and thus Reconciled who were at deadly enmity before? yea, they are so Reconciled, as that there wil never more be any breach

breach between them: so Reconciled, as that all that ever can be done in the world shal never break the bond of friendship that is between them. Here is a Reconcilement to purpose, and this Reconcilement there is between God, and every Beleeving Soul at the first moment; when thou first comest to Jetus Christ, God shakes hands with thee, entereth into League with thee, becomes a friend to thee, is so Reconciled unto thee, as that there shal be nothing in the world shal ever break the Atonement that is made between God thy Soul. You shal see how God himself expresseth it; in that 54. *Isa.* 10. speaking to his Church about this very word of Reconciliation, he saith: *The mountaines shall depart, and the Hills be removed, but my kindnes shall not depart from thee, neither shall the Covenant of my Peace be removed saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee.* This Scripture, though spoken to the Church, is true of every beleeving soul. Do you think that Mountains are firm? many stormes, and tempests may be abroad; but all the stormes in the world cannot remove the mountaines. Look, saith God how firm, and steady the mountains are, So firm shall my mercy be to thee, and the Covenant of my peace. Hath God had mercy upon thy soul, and hath he been reconciled unto thee? know then, it is such a Reconciliation as is more stable, and firm than the very mountains themselves. O! this is the Complement, the top of Reconciliation, that it is a perpetual Reconciliation; So that notwithstanding, though some of Gods waies may perhaps be towards you as if you were an enemy, God may so appear to you sometimes, yet peace is to thee; God intends no hurt at all, howsoever he may look somtimes as an enemy, yet at that time he means thee not the least hurt. All the afflictions that befall thee, they do not come from God as from an enemy, though perhaps through thy weaknesse thou mai'st think so; for though God be Reconciled to thee in so gracious a way, yet if he correct thee, thou art

art apt to look upon him as an enemy ; No, it is thy mistake, Gods Reconciliation is a through Reconciliation, and may stand with all those Corrections that he useth towards thee.

7 Yea, this Reconciliation wil continue constant, notwithstanding all those sins of thine, which indeed of their own nature make breaches between God, and man. Take heed of abusing such a doctrine as this is. Thy sins cannot overcome Gods goodnes ; O ! let Gods goodness overcome thy wickednesse : for that is certain ; the Lord when he was first reconciled to thee, he did know that there would be many failings, and fallings out, as it were, but yet he was resolved to be reconciled ; and that that receconciliation should continue notwithstanding all those failings : and thy sins, though they may change some administrations of God towards thee, so that he may severely Correct thee, yet they shall not take away this Reconciliation, but the Lord will continue thy friend stil. But yet if indeed thou beest Reconciled ; God wil put this into thy heart, that when there is any failing in thee, thou wilt never be at quiet till thou comest to renue thy peace again. Thou mayest lose the fence of thy peace, but thou shalt never lose thy peace indeed. And though we cannot speak such a truth as this is without fear, and trembling ; because it may cost the hardening of many a soul, yet so willing is God that his people shal be Comforted, as that he will have this doctrine of Reconciliation published, though it cost the damnation of many sinners.

8 Yea, the Accusations of the Devil against thee shal never provoke God, so as to turn enemy to thee again. There may be peace made between friend, and friend, but it may be there may be some whisperers some tale-bearers, and make-bates, by a spirit of jealousie that may goe between them, and do abundance of mischief by their suggestions ; but this cannot be between God and us. It is true, the Devil would be continually a make-bate between

between God, and thy soul, and doth continually go before God to accuse the soul, and therefore he is called the Accuser of the Brethren. But the peace that is made up between God, and a soul, through his Son, is so firme, and the friendship is so stable, as that the Lord shuts his Ears against all the accusations that can be made against his friends. One intire friend cannot indure to hear ill of another. It is a signe that freindship begins to grow cold when they are willing to hear of any evill against their freind. The Lord will not listen to the least accusation that is made by Satan against his friend, he will not so much as be willing to hear of any thing spoken against his people; such a perfect, and through, and firm peace is there made between the soul, and God.



CHAP. 5.

Twelve Blessed Consequents of our Reconciliation.

But now that which I specially intended, should have been to have shewed you some Consequences of this peace. And therein I should have shewed you, the excellency of the Reconciliation. I will give you the particulars thereof very briefly.

The first Consequence.

First, hence followeth peace with al the Creatures in the world; whereas before, not only God was an enemy, but all the Creatures were enemies: the good Creatures, the ill Creatures, thy Companions whom thou thoughtest to be thy friends; the Heavens, the earth, the Beasts in the field, the Stones in thy House, they were all thy enemies, not the least Creature in the world but was one of the Host of God ready preferred to avenge the quarrell of God upon thee. You are

afraid of souldiers, why have you not all this while been afraid of the Host of the Almighty God? God hath Souldiers enough, even in your own house which he can raise up against you; he can raise the very dog that is in your family to tear out your throat if he once give him a Commission; for there is an enmity between every Creature, and a sinful soul, and it must be so. If there be an enmity against the General, and Commander in chief of the Army, there must needs be then the like enmity against the souldiers. Thou that art a sinful soul, thou walkest up and down in the midst of Gods Host that are ready every moment to destroy thee, and that stands waiting for a Commission from God, the Lord of Host to revenge his quarrell upon thee. But now being once reconciled unto God, all this Host, all the whole Creation is reconciled unto thee. All the good Creatures, the Angels they are now for thy good, whereas before they stood ready waiting for a Commission from God to strike thee to the heart, for the Angels do wait when God wil give them a command to execute upon those that offend him, and they are gone presently to put the same in execution; and to it is with every other Creature. But now being reconciled, these Angels are become ministring spirits unto thee. It is a great matter to have the Angels reconciled: by being at peace with God they come to be Reconciled also unto thee, and instead of being thy enemies, they are as so many fair chariots to guard thee from whatsoever may hurt thee. The same I may say of all evil Creatures too, they are all so far reconciled to thee, as that they shal do thee no hurt or prejudice. But

The Second Consequence

Secondly: A Second fruit that follows, is, Peace of Conscience, whereas before thy Conscience terrified thee, struck fear, and dread in thy heart, & continually accused thee before God, and was as Gods Officer to fill thy Soul with poysoned Arrows, and to rend and tear thee. But now

now thou being at peace with God, thy Conscience is at peace too, *Rom. 5. 1. Being justified by faith we have peace with God through Jesus Christ*; then follows those most sweet, and comfortable effects which we are afterwards to treat of: But this is the fruit of Reconciliation, Peace of Conscience, which is worth ten thousand worlds. For one to have his Conscience his enemy, to have his Conscience continually to terrifie him, it is a greater judgment, than to have all the wild Beasts in the world, to come and tear and rent his flesh.

Third Consequence.

Thirdly, there is in the soul a Peace in all other faculties. As thus: Before the work of Reconciliation between God and man was done, the Scripture saith, there is no Peace to the wicked in regard of tumultuous workings of the many lusts that are in their hearts, the one continually fighting against the other: the Conscience telling one thing, and the will of a man that opposeth Conscience; and the affections they are all in a tumult one against another; one lust opposeth another, fighteth against another; there is a disorder, and a confusion, and a tumult in the heart of a wicked man, he goes against the light, and the light against him, and there is nothing but warring, and combustion in his heart: *Your lusts* (saith the Apostle) *war one against another, within you*; and you may easily find it to be so if you observe your selves, that when your lusts are once up, they breed such a woful disturbance in your heart, that you are like the Sea that casts up nothing but mire and dirt. Take a wicked man that hath but some darting in of any light; telling him what the mind of God is, his heart fights against this light, and the light fights against his heart; so that there are nothing but woful disturbances in his Soul, and he is never at Peace; No, not when he seems to be most serene and quiet. But now when we come to be at Peace with God there is a blessed calme comes into the

Spirit of a man, the Conscience, the wil, and the affections are brought into a sweet, and Comly order, and things are in a great measure more quiet than ever they were.

The fourth Consequence.

4. The fourth fruit is, Joy in the Holy Ghost: for God being at Peace with a soul, the Holy Spirit comes, and sheddeth abroad the love of God. It is true, sometimes we are not sensible of this joy, but when once we come to know that we are Reconciled unto God, then we come to feele the joy of the Holy Spirit shed abroad in our hearts. This you have in Rom. 5. *Having Peace with God, we rejoyce in tribulation.* And more especially in Rom. 14. 17. *The Kingdom of God is not meat, and drink, but Righteousness and Peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit:* Joy in the Holy Spirit follows our Peace, or our Reconciliation with God. That is a fourth particular.

The fifth Consequence.

5. There is likewise this fruit of it. Hence the soul comes to have free access into Gods presence with boldness. Indeed when I look upon God as an enemy unto me, and upon my self as an enemy unto God, how can I come into Gods presence with boldness. But being Reconciled, I come to have access to God. Adam could not stand in Gods presence when once he had broken his Peace with God, but our Peace being made through Jesus Christ, we may come into the presence of God, and comfortably look upon his face, and see no hatred, nor revenging wrath in it.

The sixth Consequence.

6. Hence there may be a sweet, and blessed trade between Heaven and Earth, between God, and the soul Reconciled. As in Countries that are at Warr one with another, there cannot be any traffique, or trading between those Countries. But if once there come to be a League and a Peace made up between the one and the other, then
trade

trade is open. So it is between God, and the soul. And the truth is, there is no free trade made between Heaven and us, till Peace be made, we cannot trade to Heaven, and fetch Commodities from thence, we may speak to Heaven, and Cry, and say our Prayers (as the phrase is) but to fetch from thence the rich Commodities that are in that Country, we cannot till there be a Peace Concluded. Indeed a gracious heart that is Reconciled to God, never sends up a prayer unto God, but he doth as a rich man that sendeth a Ship to the Indies, nay, it is far more & better, for you may loose your Ship, and your adventure that you send may miscarry : But when a gracious soul trades with God, and sendeth his Ship of prayer to Heaven, he never fails of having a sweet and rich return.

The seventh Consequence.

7. Now we come to enjoy all the good we have in this world as upon a new right, it is settled upon us, and comes to us upon a new account, through a new right, and so it is far more Comfortable than before; for before we had forfeited all that we had, because we had taken up Arms against God: and you know, when there is once a taking up of Arms, that very act occasions presently a forfeiting of an estate. So, we having taken up Arms against the God of Heaven, we have forfeited all our Comforts, and enjoyments, and we have cause to wonder that God doth not send some arrest upon our estates, and seize upon all that we have. But now peace being made between God, and us, all is restored againe. And so those who are reconciled unto God, they may enjoy Comfort in what they do possess, they may look upon their Houses, upon their Trade, upon their meat, and upon their drink, as all fruits of their Peace with God.

The eight Consequence.

8. Hence follows likewise the protection of God over us, and over all we have, so that we may enjoy all securely

curely. I do not affirm but God may send the Adversary, and he may take away our goods when he sees it may make for our good: But certainly we are under Gods protection, and there shal not one hair fal from our heads without leave and Commission from God, the enemy cannot take away one hair, or one farthing token without Commission from God, under whose protection we are, you shal not lose so much as one farthing, but so, as if you knew all, you would be willing to lose it. You wil say, Would any one be willing to be plundered? Truly, if you knew that there were the work of Gods wisdom in it to you, and how it doth accomplish his end, and work his glory, if you loved God, you would willingly give up your selves, and your estates unto him, and say, it is better for me to give up al that I have when it may be for the glory of God, though I cannot tel the particular way, yet I know God wil have his glory by it, than it is for me stil to retain the possession thereof. Therefore the Saints of God have nothing taken away from them, but what is by warrant from God; and from God that is my friend, and remains my friend. We do not understand the vastness of Gods love, if we do not think that Gods intire love can stand with such a work, as taking away some of our estate: Gods love is so vast, as it can stand with a thousand such things as that is. Al these troubles, and afflictions, falling into the infinite Sea of Gods love, makes no alteration therein.

The ninth Consequence.

9. Upon this Reconciliation with God, God, and you come to have Common friends and Common enemies. Doth God come into a league with you, and are you Reconciled unto God? hence forward saith God, all your enemies shal be my enemies, and all your friends shal be my friends, and so it shal be with you, you shal look upon al my enemies, as your enemies, and upon al my friends, as your friends.

The tenth Consequence.

10. Now you come to be in as good a Condition as ever you were before there was any sin committed in the world: we were at Peace with God in *Adam*, and it is broken. I do not say this which we have now is Peace so properly, as it is Reconciliation, it is a recovering of Peace, and thou being received into this Peace, thou art in as good a condition, in as happy an estate as *Adam* was in Innocency, yea, and happyer too; for though there was a Peace between God and him then, yet there was a possibility for *Adam* to turne an enemy to God. But it is not so with thee, now thou art therefore safer. Gods heart is as much towards thee, as ever it was towards *Adam*, yea more, for thou art in a better Covenant now, in regard thou art in a Covenant of grace, though no thank to sin, but God hath so ordered it, and turned it, that as they say of a bone that is broken, if it be wel sett, it is stronger than it was before: So when the heart is true, and wel set in this Reconciliation with God, it is more firme with God, it is in a better Condition than it was before the Breach was made. This is that which may be abundance of joy to the heart of a man. When a man hath been at a difference with a great man, at whose disposal lyes his life, and al that he hath, what a joyful thing is it to that man when there comes in one to Reconcile them both, and so to Reconcile them, that he shal be in a better Condition than ever he was, that he shal have the great man to be a surer friend to him than ever he was. Wel, Christians, go together and rejoyce in this blessed goodness of God, in this happy Reconciliation which Christ is come to make between God. and man.

The eleventh Consequence.

11. That by our Peace, and with our Peace, whatsoever wrath of God, whatsoever Judgments of God comes abroad, or are executed in the world, we come to be freed from the evil of them, so that none of that
wrath

wrath shal befall us, not in any revenging way, as it doth befall wicked and ungodly men, but we shal Certainly be delivered from all the evil of it. When judgments are sent from heaven abroad into the world, there is a protection unto al those that are Reconciled unto God, though there be darkness every where else, yet there is light in their hearts, they are alwaies in *Goshan*, though God be never so terrible in his judgments unto others, yet this terror of God is taken from them. If you should hear the noise of Trumpets, and Drums, the neighing of Horses, the roaring of Cannons, and shooting of Muskets, and all the dreadful sound of warlike instruments: peradventure at the first it may strike some feare and terror into you, but when you come to hear, that al comes from your friend, it takes away the terror of al these things. If a man comes to a house where there are a Company of fierce mastive Dogs that are barking as if they would come presenly and tear out his throat, he may happily be in some fear; but if the master of the house be his friend, and if he stand by, he need not then fear that any hurt shal come to him by them. It is true indeed, if he be an enemy, or if he be a Thief, that comes to steal, and destroy he may fear these mastives. So, the Troubles of the world, may come with open mouth, as if they would devour us, but if we be Gods friends, if he stand by, we need not fear what they can do to us, for we have a *quietus est*, we have a protection from God from all the evils that are in the world. Though the devouring Angel shal come to destroy, yet (if the blood of Christ who is our Peace be sprinkled upon the posts of the doors of our hearts) this Angel shal pass away from us. This is another fruit of our Peace with God; namely, protection from the wrath of God when it spreads abroad as Lightning in the world.

The twelfth Consequence.

12. Again: Hence all that is in Gods word speaks Peace to us, both the Law, and the Gospel; the very
Law

Law it self comes to speak Peace to us because it is now fully satisfied; there is nothing in the word of God, but is at Peace with those that are at Peace with him. The threats that are in the word of God bring no evill at all to him that is reconciled to God, every part of Gods word doth do good to them that walk uprightly, according to that in *Mic. 2. 7.* *Do not my words do good to him that walketh uprightly?* When thou readeest any part of the word of God though never so terrible, if thou art Reconciled to God, thou mayest read it with comfort. Many people dare not read somewhat of Gods word; they scarce dare come to hear somewhat of Gods word, but if thou beest at peace with God, thou needest not fear the reading, or the hearing of any part of Gods word. What is the Reason that many people when there is an argument preached that hath any terror in it, they will come no more to hear it? It is, whatsoever their pretences be, a sign that there is some guilt in their hearts, they look upon the word of God as if it were their enemy; and it is a sad thing for a man to look upon any part of Gods word as his enemy; Certainly if any part of Gods word be thy enemy, God is thy enemy, for there is no part of the word of God, but there is Gods mind, and Gods heart in it, and therefore if thou beest at peace with God, there is nothing in that word of God which is thine enemy. Indeed, a man that is on the Sea, if storms, and Tempests arise: he may peradventure be afraid to look out, he may not dare to stir out of his Cabbin: But if he be on shore, he can stand, and look upon all the waves of the Sea, and upon all the boysterousness of it without any trouble to him. So, when men are in their natural Condition, when they are not converted unto God; then when they come to hear of the terrors of the Law, alas they cannot enter into Consideration of that wrath of God which the Law threatneth, and which they apprehend is due unto them because of sin, but their very hearts shake, & they do even shut their eyes against those truths.

But when they are once got upon the shore, when there is a Peace made between God and them, then they may look upon all the terrors of the Law, and upon all that wrath that is threatened therein, with joy and Comfort, and bless the name of God for ever that they are freed and delivered from them. These are the blessed, and happy fruits of our Peace, and Reconciliation with God. And now before we go any further, we must abide a while in the Application of what hath been thus far opened unto you concerning the excellencies, and glorious fruits of this Peace and Reconciliation.

CAHP. 6.

U & E

Wherefore in the first Place: From hence it must needs follow, that if there be such a blessed peace between God, and a true Christian as hath been opened. Then he must needs be very peaceable in the world, he must needs be of a very peaceable disposition before men. You will say, How doth this follow? Thus. There is so much sweetness in this Peace with God, that it must needs so quiet the spirit of that man in whom it is, that whatsoever is without shall never be able to make any great disturbance in his Spirit, so great, and so excellent is the sweetness of this Peace. A Merchant that hath all his estate in one Bottom, he is upon every stirring of the winds, or upon the hearing of any storme, afraid that all is cast away. But if he hear news, that the Ship is safe, and that all is come securely into the Haven, his Spirit that was afraid before, will be now so quieted, and satisfied with this newes, that it will not be very easie matter at such a time to anger such a man. There is nothing that is more able to keep the heart of a man from passion, and forwardness, and disturbance, than a full satisfaction within ones own spirit. Now, if there

be any thing in the world that is able to satisfy the spirit of a man; surely it is the Peace with God, it is Reconciliation which is made between a man, and God. The Scripture saith, *that a good man shall be satisfied from himself.* Prov. 14. 14. *Ex sese, as Mercerus, expresseth it, i. e. from himself.* Although he meeteth with those without that are troublesome, and wil not satisfy him, that he hath so much within, that he satisfies, and quieteth his own spirit: Therefore a Christian needs not be beholding to the world for Peace, for he hath Peace enough within his own bosome. That which is the greatest Jewel in the world, a Christian hath the full possession of within his own heart. All the Storms, and tempests that are abroad in the world can never make an Earthquake if there be not some vapors within to do it. So, that which doth shake the hearts of men, and make a Combustion in their Spirits, it is more the inward disturbances that are there, than any thing from without. We may Complain of outward things, and of this matter, and of this occasion, and the like; But the truth is, ifal be examined, and the true ground of our disquietness searched into, we shall find, that the Cause of al our disturbance is rather from within, than from without; and if al were wel within, we should never be troubled with any thing which doth befall us from without. Now then if any thing in the world wil make al quiet within, if any thing in the world wil beget a serenity, and Calmness in the spirits of men, it is this Reconciliation with God. No marvel then that the Gospel speakes so much of the peaceable disposition of those that entertaine it, that it tells us of the Wolves dwelling with the Lamb, of the Lyons eating straw with the Oxe, that is, though men were formerly of such Wolfish, and Lyon-like natures, yet having received the Gospel, and accepted of the terms of Reconciliation with God, they shall be as Lambs, they shall agree one with another. And the reason is because there is so much in the Peace of the Gospel as wil quiet the heart, so that a man may wonder when

he Considers of the excellency of the Peace that is between God and man, how it is possible for a Christian to be put into a passion? You Complain of the troubles you meet withal in your world, that your Husband is froward, or that the Wife is froward, that you have perverse Neighbours; but, is God at Peace with thee? is not he froward towards thee? and shal your spirits be disturbed with those things when you are at Peace with God? is there not enough in this peace to swallow up all those disturbances? I have observed, that it is a frequent complaint of those that are taken to be godly men, they wil say, such a one is a very good man, but he is very passionate, and froward: truly it is a an extreame blot to professors: and the truth is, if we duly consider all things, a man would think there should be nothing more opposite to the spirit of a Christian, than frowardness, and passion is, nothing more opposite to true grace; for when grace comes, when Faith in Christ comes, it breedeth such abundance of peace in our hearts, that one would think that frowardness, and passion with any in the world should be inconsistent with the Reconciliation here spoken of, with true grace, and with Faith in Christ. When men are of such spirits that they are soon put into a passion, and being in a passion cannot be Reconciled, it is a dangerous sign that there is not that peace made between God and your souls that you speake of. And Certainly this is the reason why many Christians are so passionate as they are, because they do not maintain their peace with God: there is usually some breach in their peace with God which makes them so froward, and so passionate as they are with men. And to shew, that the more our peace with God is broken, the more froward wil our spirits be. You have a notable example for that in Saul; Saul when he came first to the Crown, he seemed to be of a very low, and meek spirit, he counteth his family to be the least of the Tribes, and himself to be of the least of that family. And when
ther

there were some Children of *Belial* that spaek against him, and said, Shal this man be King over us? The scripture tels us that he held his peace : and when some would have had those that spake against him before to be put to death, no, saith *Saul*, there shal not any man be put to death this day. At first you see *Saul* was of a quiet spirit, of a very meek disposition, but after *Saul* had departed from God, and God was departed from him, he was then of a very froward, and surly, and rugged and harsh disposition, and he that was before of a peaceable, and quiet disposition to his enemies, yet afterwards he was of a froward, and cross disposition, even to his own Son, to *Jonathan* who was a good Son, a gracious, and godly Son, a Son of a sweet nature, and yet even to him, how harsh was he, O thou child of a perverse woman saith he, and he would have slaine him in that passion, if the people had not prevented him. And how froward was he likewise when he was but crossed of his wil, when he heard that the Priests had but let *David* pass away with some smal supplies, they must be al put to death, man, woman, and Child, and fourscore and five of the Priests of the Lord that wore a sinnen Ephod must al be presently mured, such a froward, cross, rugged, and harsh nature was *Saul* of, and what was the reason of this? Because he had departed from God, and God was departed from him. You therefore that are of froward, and passionate Spirits, have cause to look into your own hearts, and examine your selves wel whether this be not the ground of it, even that you have broke your peace with God, and now you are at peace with nobody, not with Husband, nor with Wife, nor with Neighbors, whereas if you did keep close with God, and maintained but the sweetness of your hearts in the injoyment of peace with him, it would not be easy for you to be disturbed with any thing that befalls you from without. This is the first thing that followeth from the sweetness of our Reconciliation with God.

God, that a gracious heart who knows what that meaneth, must needs be of a sweet, and lovely, and meek disposition towards others.

CHAP. 7.

USE. 2.

Secondly, O! the blessed estate of a Believer, of one that hath embraced the Gospel, he is Reconciled to God, he is at peace with God; and that hath a great deal in it as you have heard. The Jews were wont to express all kind of prosperity, and happiness by this word [*Peace*]. *Peace be to you*; and in saying so, they did with all manner of good; for indeed the word is a comprehensive word; and therefore God accounteth it his glory, to be called the God of Peace; and the very God of Peace, &c. And the Son of God, it is his glory to be the Prince of Peace. And the Spirit of God, it is his glory to have the fruits of the Spirit to be Joy, and Peace. And it is the honor of the Gospel, to be the Gospel of Peace. And it is the glory of the Kingdom of God to consist in righteousness, and Peace. And it is the Evangelical benediction; Grace, & peace. It is the glory of the Covenant of Life, to be a Covenant of Peace. Peace, it is a most amiable thing; But Peace with God, how lovely, and amiable, and glorious in it? Ask a wounded Conscience that apprehends, and is sensible of that enmity that sitteth put between God; and it, what it would give for peace with God? Ask, Ask a dying man that apprehends what God is, one who hath no peace with God, what he would give for Peace with God? If you could possibly ask those damned spirits that are now in Hell, what they think of peace with God? O! what a Commendation would they set on this peace! Well may we
be

be willing to endure some trouble in seeking after this peace with God: well may we be contented to lie under the stroke of the Law as long as God pleaseth, for this peace will at last make up all. Those that have endured the greatest terrors of the Law, when the Lord hath come in with manifestations of this peace, and Reconciliation to them in Jesus Christ, they have thought all well recompenced; and if it had been to endure a thousand times more than they have done, they would have thought all to have been made up in this blessed peace. This is a blessing indeed in these troublesom times wherein we hear of nothing but of wars and of rumors of wars, and we are taught by what we now hear, and feel, and know, to prize outward peace. But if we think outward peace be to great a mercy, what is this Reconciliation, and peace with God, the Soul blessings.

Yea, you will say, there is a great deal of Blessing indeed in this Reconciliation with God which we have read of, and happy is the soul that is at peace with him. But how shall we know that we are those that are Reconciled to God, that so we may enjoy those blessed fruits of Reconciliation, that is here treated of? I confesse, this is worth the knowing, and worth the searching after, and it is a good sign if your hearts be seriously inquisitive to know how terms stand between God and your souls: and this is a thing that doth not usually take up the thoughts of men, and perhaps there are many that scarce in all the daies of their lives had their thoughts seriously taken up with this, to consider, how do the terms stand between God and my soul? I here go up and down in the world, and busie my self about this, and the other thing. But O! my soul, how doest things stand between God, and you? are all things well there? are all things quiet there? hath not God something against you? hath not God dreadful things to charge upon you? Yea, you will say, God hath enough to charge upon us all. No, but if thou be at peace with God in Christ, God hath

hath nothing to charge thee withal. And it is possible for one to be in such a Condition, as to know that God hath nothing to charge him with, and so he may be able to stand before the Lord, as freed from any thing that God hath to lay to his charge. This might be manifested further as the excellency of our peace with God. It is true, none can be in such a condition but that they have sin enough in themselves to be charged upon them if God look upon them in themselves; and those solus that charge themselves most, those usually God hath least to charge upon. In themselves I affirm, God hath enough against them; but God looking upon them in Jesus Christ, he hath nothing to charge them withal, so as that they should stand guilty in his presence, or be answerable to his Law which they have broken. You will say, How then can God afflict for sin? Yes, there is no such consequence, that because men have nothing to answer unto the Law, therefore they are not to be afflicted, for afflictions to those that are Reconciled to God, are not fruits of the Law, but they are dispensations of God in his waies of wisdom to his people; because he thinks that afflictions are a fit way to manifest unto themselves, and to the world that he is a holy God, and that he is displeased with sin, and God works upon them in such a way, but not as in a way of giving satisfaction to divine Justice, that is not Gods end in afflicting of them. There is a great deal of difference between a fatherly displeasure, and a revenging displeasure; God hath swallowed up in this Reconciliation, all the displeasure of a Judge, all his revenging displeasure; and he hath everlastingly swallowed it up, but yet there may remain the other, he hath not swallowed up his fatherly displeasure, but retains it, and that without any derogation to himself, all tending to the good of those that the Lord manifesteth such displeasure against.

C H A P. 8.

How to know whether a mans Peace be made with God, opened in seven Particulars. 1. Every weapon of war against God is laid down. 2. There hath been treaties of Peace between God and that soul. 3. Peace with God wil make thee abhor thy self for thy former cursed waies. 4. It wil make thee on Gods side. 5. It wil preserve from evil. 6. It wil enable thee to suffer much. 7. It wil make thee highly prise it.

But I say, the Soul should be often inquiring how things stand between God, and it; Are the termes right between God and my soul? Am I at peace with him, or am I not? if not, how can I sleep? how can I go about my business, and God be an enemy to me? And if I do go about my business, it is a sign of a bold, and presumptuous heart to go up and down merrily, and quietly, and yet this great question, how termes are between God, and my soul comes not to be determined of. Would you then know whether indeed the termes are good, and right, and peaceable between God, and you?

I

First, Certainly, except thou hast layed down all thy weapons of war, and enmity against God, thou art not yet at peace with him. And canst thou in the uprightness of thy heart appeal thus unto God? Lord, thou knowest there's no weapon of enmity against thee in my heart that ever I have taken notice of, but I have been willing, and shal be willing to lay it down, and God forbid that ever there should be the least weapon of war found in my heart against God. Every known sin in

I

thee

thee is a weapon of warfare against God, and though thou should'st lay down many, yet if that be not layed down; if thou keepest any one known sin within thee, certainly that one sin is enough to make an eternal breach, and enmity between God, and thy soul. Now, be not at quiet, be not at rest in thy own spirit, do not sleep quietly this night, except thou canst bring thy heart to this, that thou canst go in secret between God and thy self, and say; O Lord, thou knowest I have renounced all the waies of sin that ever thou hast revealed to me, though my sins do cleave to me as close as my skin to my flesh, yet as soon as I take notice of them, as soon as thou makest them known unto me; I cry out and complaine against them. As suppose in time of war, some come into your houses, and you know not at their first coming who they are: but are afterward by their Carriage, and behavior, and by their speech you come to take notice that they are of your enemies: Now if after taking notice of them, you shal make much of them, and Cherrish them, and entertain them, and supply their wants, give them Money, or Plate, or what else you have, you will be found to be an enemy to the State. But if as soon as you take notice of them, you desire them to be gone, and you do what you can to thrust them out of your doores; and if they be too strong for you, you go and complayne to your neighbour, or to the Officers that are about you, and you desire them to afford you some strength to apprehend them, this cannot be charged upon you, that you are an enemy to the state, why? Because though they be in your house, yet it is full sore against your wills. And so, many men, though they entertain their Corruptions, and Cherrish them, and fulfil the lusts of them, they think to put it off with this, what wil you have me to do? I cannot help it: But do you complaine of it? do you cry out unto God, and say, Lord here is an enemy, an enemy to thee, as wel as unto my self? an enemy to thy glory, as wel as to my

own soul; O that thou wouldst come in and cast this enemy of mine & thine out of my heart, I cannot sleep quiet, I cannot rest, and be at peace so long as this enemy is within me, till thou comest and cast it out. This is a sign that thou art at peace with God, if thou hast laid down thy weapons of warfare against God, and art at enmity with every sin: If thou entertaineest in thy bosom no known sin, though never so secret. And this is the most eminent sign that can be, so that the weakest Christian may be able to apply it to himself, and come to know somewhat about this peace with God.

2

Secondly, If thou wouldst know whether God, and thee be reconciled, then let me put this to thee: What Treaties have there been made between God, and thy Soul? for this you must know, that though there may be a Peace indeed made between God and thee, in some kind even from eternity (as I shall afterwards shew you) yet before it come into thy heart, before thou canst come to know it, there must a Treaty pass between God, and thee. Reconciliation that is from eternity comes from Treaties between God the father, and God the Son, and that Reconciliation that in time comes into the Conscience, is a fruit of some Treaty that hath been between God, and thy self. As for example: When God would be at peace with a Soul, he summons that Soul to come in, he tels it that it is an enemy to him, and that he is going on in contrary waies to him. As usually you know when enemies come to a Town, they will first summon the Town before they storm it: So the Lord summons thee to come in. When did God ever summon thy heart? Hast thou felt the power of Gods summons in thy soul? Then again: Hast thou felt much intercourse between God and thy Soul? Hath God been speaking to thy heart, and thy heart speaking unto God? Hath God been working towards thee, and hath thy heart been working towards God? Hath the

Lord sent unto thee by his word, and hast thou sent up unto him by prayer, and as the Lord waits upon thee to know what thy answer is when he speaks to thee: So, dost thou wait upon him to know his answer when thou prayest, What have been the Treaties that have passed secretly in thy closet between God and thy Soul? Thou dost not go on in a dul way, and come and hear the word of God, but never hear the voice of God, but when thou comest to hear Gods word, thou hearest Gods voyce, thou hearest him speak unto thee, Treating with thee about matters of Peace, and thou feelest Gods Spirit drawing thy heart, and telling somewhat of Gods mind unto thee: perhaps at this time, and for the present whilest thou art hearing, thou tellest God secretly by ejaculations. Lord I am willing to accept of those tearms of Peace, and Reconciliation; I am willing to accept of the Conditions of the Covenant. Or perhaps when thou doest not this when thou art hearing, yet when thou art got alone, then thou openest thy self more unto God, and sendest a full answer unto God. This is the way of treating, that when thou comest to hear Gods word offering tearms of peace, and requiring such, and such tearms, thou at the very hearing sendest up by ejaculations secretly in answer to God, Lord, I accept of the tearms, and when thou art gone, sendest up a full answer, and then how doest thou blest his name that ever he was pleased to offer such tearms unto thee, though they were a thousand times harder. Hath there ever been any such doings in thy heart? hath it been one of the greatest works that ever thy heart hath been set upon? hath thy heart been set more upon this work of the treaty with God about peace, than about any thing that ever concerned thee in all thy life? Then it is a good evidence unto thee that thou art in a way of Peace, and if thy Conscience speaks peace unto thee from this, it will be a comfortable evidence indeed. But the truth is I cannot give you the full, and thorough evidence, so as fully to satisfy your heart til I come to the next point.

To shew you how the heart is brought to Christ and reconciled to God in him. But somewhat may be done to help the soul that way.

3

Thirdly, the Third Signe therefore is this. If thou beeſt at peace with God, then upon Gods being pacified towards thee, and upon thy apprehension of it, it wil make thee looke back to thy former wretched dealings with God, and be confounded in thy own thoughts, and cause thee even to abhor thy self for that cursed carriage of thy heart towards him, and dealings with him when thou wert in away of opposition, and when thou wert walking Contrary to him. I wil give you a most excellent scripture for that : it is in the 16. of *Ezek.* the latter end. *That thou mayest remember and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more ; Why ? Because of thy shame, when I am pacified towards thee for all that thou hast done ;* that is the time you see when the soul comes to be ashamed of its wretched dealings with God, and be confounded in the thought thereof, even when the Lord is pacified towards it for al the evil that it hath done towards him. Lay this therefore, (when you lay aside this Book and are got alone,) warm to hearts. A man would think, if God should aske the question, that this should rather be answered when God comes, and reveales the fruits of this wrath towards a soul, no, but when I am pacified, (saith God) towards thee ; then thou shalt be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more. So that if thou hast any evidence, any found evidence to thy soul that the Lord is pacified towards thee for al the evil that thou hast done against him, it wil make thee look back to thy former actings, and when thou dost remember them thou wilt be Confounded in thy own thoughts, and whatsoever God doth do with thee, thou wilt never open thy mouth any more but be ashamed of thy self for al thy wicked dealings towards God. Many of your Consciences may tel you that there hath been divers horrible things acted by you against

gainst the Lord, what sins have not many of you lived in? do you hope that God is reconciled to you, and pacified towards you for althose horrible things that you have done? If he be, you wil upon this grace of God towards you, look back upon what you have done formerly, and be confounded in your own souls, and the more you apprehend your peace to be made with God, the more wil you be ashamed, and the more wil you be troubled for what you have done. Many a wretched sinner that hath lived in waies of sin, when the fear of death comes upon him wil be confounded & ashamed of what he hath done; & then he wil complain, & cry out to others, and desire them to pray for him; but that is not the thing that God here speaks of, for let God but set such a one upon his feet again, and free him from his sickness, and fears, he is no longer confounded, and ashamed, but wil be as jolly, and as merry as before. But if God indeed be pacified towards thy soul, thou wilt then be confounded, and ashamed for all the evils that thou hast done against him. This is as comfortable an argument that peace is made betwixt God, and us, and that he is reconciled towards us, as any I know, when upon the apprehension of that peace and Reconciliation we come to be confounded in our own Souls.

4

Fourthly, One that is at peace with God, wil evermore be on Gods side, he wil go which way the cause of God goes, and he wil be content though it be never so dangerous to venture himself on Gods side. As such a one by a secret instinct from God himself is able to know and distinguish which is Gods side, and he is not so full of questions as others are: So being once reconciled to God, and at friendship with him, he will alwaies be on that side. Many wil say, indeed if we knew which were Gods side, we would be of it: friends, the reason why you find it so hard to find, and discern the side of God, and to know it, it is because you are not friends to God; if God were thy friend, his secrets would be

be made known unto thee : try now whether it be so with thee or no : where ever thou art; if there be siding against God, though there be but few that stand up for him, and his Cause, thou wilt be sure to joyn with them that stand for God, though they be the fewest, and though they be meanest in the Town where thou livest : this is a true argument that thou art one that art at peace with God.

5

Fifthly, If thou bee'st at peace with God, this peace hath a great deal of power to preserve thee from evill *Phil. 4. 7. The Peace of God shall keep your hearts,* saith the Text, *shall guard your hearts,* So the word is, it wil guard as a House is guarded with a Troop of Horse, or Band of Souldiers : if temptations come, the peace of God will guard your hearts, and keep you in a gracious frame, it wil be of a mighty power to keep the soul from evil, I do not know a stronger guard in the world to keep a man from the evil of sin, than the peace of God made known unto the Soul is.

openings

Keep as with aguard, or as in a garison. Solomons Bed was not so wel guarded, Cant. 3. 7, 8. as a Saint is, by the power of God without him, and the Peace of God within him.

6

Again, if thou bee'st at peace with God, this peace wil enable thee to suffer much in Gods cause. *Eph. 6. 15. Being shod with the preparation of the Gospel of Peace;* that is, the Peace that the Gospel doth bring will enable thee to tread upon sharp stones; for, from thence the phrase is taken, and signifies as much. In those places they use to go with Sandals under their feet, it being grievous, and

As one that is wel booted or buskin'd can walk unhurt amidst briers and brambles. So may he amidst Satans snares that is fortified with Gospel comforts, whereby God creates Peace.

and hurtfull to them to go barefoot upon sharp stones. So saith the Apostle, you may meet with rough, and sharp waies in your Christian course, but the Peace which the Gospel doth bring will be as shooes to enable you to go upon those sharp stones. Doth the peace of God enable you to suffer much for God? it is a sign then that you are at Peace with him.

7
Lastly, He that is at Peace with God, doth set a mighty high esteeme upon that peace, he wil not easily part with it, he wil not easily lose it, that is the Bird in the bosom that he desires to keep singing, whatsoever becomes of him, so long as he can keep that Bird singing in his brest, he thinks himself wel enough, though he should meet with never so many difficulties, and hardships in the waies of God. One that hath got this peace with God knows how to prize it, for the truth is, ordinarily, it is gotten with a great deal of difficulty, it cost them somewhat, and it cost Jesus Christ somewhat before they could get it. Hast thou got peace with God? if it be of the right stamp, know, it cost thee dear, and it cost Jesus Christ dear, and surely now thou hast it, it wil be dear likewise to thy soul: So that if Sin should present it self to thee, and goe about to withdraw thy heart from God unto that which is evil, this wil be the very thought of thy heart (though perhaps there may be pleasure and profit in the way which sin presents to thee) this wil be the very thought of thy heart, Wil it not hinder my peace with God? If there be the least suspicion of that, away with it saith the soul, I wil not buy the pleasure, or the profit of sin at so dear a rate. It saith unto sin as the Figg Tree, and Olive Tree, said unto the other Trees when they would come and perswade them to rule over them. Shal I lose my sweetness saith the Figg Tree, and my fattness saith the Olive Tree, to come and be King over you? So saith the heart that is reconciled unto God, when sin, and the world presents themselves,

selfes to it, that I lose my sweetens, and my fatness? that I lose that blessed quietude that is between God and me, to come, and close with you? O, God forbid, surely, I will never buy the sweet of Sin at such a dear rate. It is true indeed, the men of the world who have a false peace, wil venture that peace upon any light occasion. If a man have a Jewel that is but a false Jewel, such a thing as a Bristoll stone is, that it may be is not worth two pence, he wil not be much careful of it. But if he have a Jewel that is a true Diamond or that is a right Pearl, he wil not venture that upon a little matter. The Peace that most men have, is a counterfeit false Peace and they wil soon venture it upon any terms. These men that can so readily yield to the Temptations of sin, it is an evident argument, that the Peace they have is but a false peace, and that is the reason they can part with it upon such easie conditions. But the soul that hath true peace with God, looks upon it as a Jewel of an inestimable value, as a precious Pearl: Here is my happiness saith he, you shall not have this away from me with a whistle, with a light matter, I will not part with this so, which cost me so dear, and which cost Jesus Christ himself so dear, no less than his own blood. Most people in the world think they have peace with God, but let me ask, what did your peace cost you? It cost little, and so lightly come lightly go: that is the reason of al your loose professors that walk so carelessly in their waies, the peace they have had comes lightly to them, and so goes lightly away from them, they have patched to themselves a peace, but they have not the right understanding of the mystery of the soules Reconciliation to God, and that is the very ground of the looseness of their conversations.

Thus I have endeavoured to help you to examine your peace whether it be true, or no. If you can upon these signs, or notes conclude your peace to be right, Blessed are you, go your waies rejoicing, and joyne with

the Angels in their song; Glory be to God in Heaven, and peace on Earth; glory be to the great God that is on high, that hath not only made peace on Earth, but made peace in my bosom; and therefore O my soul return unto thy rest. Thy soul may now even take its ease. You have a notable expression concerning this in Psal. 25. 12. where speaking of the happiness of the godly, he saith, *What man is he that feareth the Lord, his soul shall dwell at ease*; O! it is a blessed thing to have a soul dwell at ease. You would fain have comfortable Habitations for your bodies where you may live at ease, and not be disturbed, or be troubled, either with ill neighbors, or with fear of enemies; O! but to have your *Souls* dwell at ease, that is your happiness: and therefore, though in many places of the nation our Brethren abroad can have no houses wherein they may live at ease, but are alwaies in great streights and dangers, yet by this peace with God, if it be made sure unto thee, though thou wert in the midst of thy enemies, thy soul may come to dwell at ease. Remember that place therefore, it is a blessed and a sweet promise, and you should make much of it in such troublesome times as these are, that be that fear the Lord, *his soul shall dwell at ease*. of blessed fruit
God draw every man to his bowels at night

CHAP. 9.

Use. 3. To seek to make our Peace with God: first help
thereunto, *Keep from the unlawful Affair of usen*.
1. Labor to see God continually before you. 2. Resolve
not to be at Peace with your selves till you be at
Peace with God. 3. Seek Peace with God on his
own Conditions. 4. Prize Peace with God now, or
you will value it at the day of Judgment. and I will

That we may conclude this particular of the excellency of our Reconciliation with God: there is yet

Yet another Use which we may make of it. And that is this,
 Use 3.

If it be of such a great excellency to be at peace with God; O that you would al be in love with it, that you would al seek to make your peace with him who is the great Reconciler.

You wil say, Can we make our peace with God?

No, you cannot do it, but it is in a great part done to your hands if you have but hearts to seek after it. It is true, there is another point (but that wil fal in afterward) to shew how it is done to the hand of some already. But for the present, you must know, that you can have no evidence to your own Conscience, til you seek after this peace: and the truth is if we either knew the need of it, or the excellency of the injoyment of it, we would never be at rest in any thing til we come to be assured that it is ours.

You wil say, What shal we do?

I Answer; though we know that it is the great work of Christ to make our peace with God; yet God requires this, and in requiring it (if you belong to him) he wil convey some secret influences of his grace into you to enable you to do it; he wil give you a heart to labor for it, which indeed is one signe of our peace.

Help 1.

And therefore let me perswade you to do what you can; do but keep (for the present) from the outward act of sin; and do not wilfully give way to the inward inward act of sin, labor to get your hearts to this, than may you say, the Lord knows I do not wilfully yield to any known sin, convince your hearts, possess your hearts thoroughly with this, that it is the great work that you have to do in the world, that this is that one thing that is necessary for your souls, and you shal find, that even this wil be a mighty thing to help you on.

Help 2.

Again, Labor to set God Continually before you;
 K2 the

the greatness of God, the Majesty of God, the power of God, the goodness of God, labor to set these before you, thereby to draw your hearts to seek after your making your peace with God. There is an excellent Scripture in Isa. 27. 5. That hath some difficulty for the understanding of it, but it is very sweet if rightly understood. *Let him take hold of my strength that he may make peace with me, and he shall make Peace with me*: it is a strange kind of Phrase, and I find a great deal of difference amongst Interpreters about this text. I find Mr. Calvin, that usually hits as right as most, carrying of it by way of interrogation, and so he saith you may read it thus. *Will he take hold of my strength that he may make peace with me?* as if he should have said, what will he do: will he stay so long till he come to be made sensible of my power upon him, and of my strength to bring him down? and then it may be he will make peace with me. Thus many do, they stay till God comes to make them sensible of his power, and of his strength, and then they will make their peace with God. But I can hardly think this to be the scope, only it is a very good meditation to set God before you in his power, & in his strength, & in his glory, and to meditate with your selves thus: O, if the Lord should come now, and make me apprehensive, and sensible of that power, and strength of his, indeed this will stir up my heart to seek to make my peace with him. What is the reason that there comes so many shrieks, and cryings from souls when they are sensible of Gods power, and strength? O! they well know what a mighty God they have to do withal: the truth is the reason why men do not make it their work now to seek Reconciliation and peace with God; is because they are not apprehensive of the power, and majesty, and glory that is in God, how God is above them, and can bring them under, and make them vile, and base when he pleaseth. Therefore it is a good interpretation of the words *Will he take hold, or apprehend my strength*,

(so the word signifies) that he may make peace with me! But to me, the meaning is rather this, *will he rather make use of my goodness, and my mercy, and so make peace with me?* For that is the strength that is here meant, and that I shew you from the dependance; only first let me tell you, that in Scripture [Strength] is often used for Gods goodness, and mercy, his power to do good, as well as his power to inflict misery, and judgment. I will give you but a scripture or two for that. Num. 14. 17. *And now I beseech thee let the power of my Lord be great, according as thou hast spoken, saying, the Lord is of long Suffering, & of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression, &c.* And in vers. 19. *Pardon I beseech thee, the iniquity of this people, according to the greatness of thy mercy.* When Moses is pleading with God for a pacification between him and his people, he makes use of Gods power, O Lord (saith he) according to the greatness of thy power, or according to the greatness of thy strength (for it is all one), do this. So Psal. 47. *The Lord is the strength of my life;* where Gods power, and strength are sometimes used to set out the way of God towards David. And here the word doth signifie such a kind of strength as is to help a thing that is very weak, that as the Vine being very weak, and being left to itself, fall down, and therefore you use to put props under your Vines, which have more strength in them than the Vines have in themselves to keep them up, and that is the very word in the Original which is translated [Strength] as if God should have said, *will he make hold on me, as on a prop.* And that this is the meaning of it, appears by the dependence of the words, for the Prophet in that Chapter was speaking of the goodness of God to his Vineyard, vers. 2. *In that day sing you unto her a Vineyard of Red wine, I the Lord will keep it, I will water it every moment, least any hurt it, I will keep it night and day.* What a sweet promise is this of God to his Church: Are there a great many enemies

times abroad that are strong and powerful, and of swift feet, ready to shed blood? mark, in one verse you shall read three I's, I, I, I, saith God, I oppose my self to all the enemies of my Church: I do keep it, I will water it every moment, I will keep it: but what shall become of it in the night? I will keep it saith he, night and day. We have here a promise to help us to sleep quietly. Wel, he goes on, verse 4. *Fury is not in me*; though it is true, I may come against you in such ways that you may think I am provoked, but saith he, *fury is not in me*, I am not provoked in a revenging way towards my people. *Who would set the Briers, and Thorns against me in Battail*? there are a Company of wicked and ungodly men that may set themselves against me like Briers, and Thorns; But saith he, *I will go through them* if they come in my way, I will consume them, *I will burn them together*. But my people, they are my Vineyard, I will deal gently with them, I will be a prop, and a support to them. And then he comes in with this, *let them take hold of my strength that they may make peace with me*: as if he should say, you are pure weak creatures, you are indeed my Vineyard, and my Vine, but you are weak, and when a storm comes, you are ready to bow down, and ly quash upon the ground; yea, but saith God, though you think that my wrath is abroad in the world, yet my power and my wrath is against my enemies, and as my power, and my strength, are for you, it is no otherwise but as the setting of a prop under a Vine in a time of tempest when a storme would beat the Vine to the ground, my power shall be set under to keep it up. Now you should (saith he) take hold of this my strength, as the Vine claspeth about the prop, and so make peace with me. This is an excellent text to put you on in these dangerous times to be sure to make peace with God. You that are godly, and have some hopes that God hat peace with you, it may be you are troubled with fears of danger, know that God puts under his power

power, and his strength, and he would have you take hold of it, take hold of my strength saith he, even as the Vine takes hold of the prop, and so by renewing the act of Faith upon my power, and goodness, thereby you shall renew your peace with me, that whatsoever fury is abroad to burn the Briers, and Thorns, yet you shall have peace with me, and that power of mine that is put forth to destroy them, shall be a prop to uphold you. So that this Scripture, as it makes much for the opening of what I said before, so it seems to put you on to a laboring, and indeavouring to make your peace with God in troublesome times. Set therefore before your eyes the power of God, the greatness of God: That is one interpretation. Then set before your eyes the goodness, and the mercy of God, that your hearts may come and twist themselves about this God, as the Vine doth about the prop, or the hop about the pole.

Help 3.

In your making your peace with God, observe this rule: *To resolve with your own hearts, that you will never be at peace with your selves til you be at peace with God*, that you will never have any peace in your own hearts, til you have gotten true peace with God. I do not say, that you should resolve never to have peace with others, but I say, resolve never to be at peace with your selves: and it is a good controversy when men are at contention with their evil hearts. Say within your selves, shall I be at peace with this wretched heart that is an enemy unto God? God forbid, this heart of mine shall be brought down, and be at peace with God before ever I will be at peace with it. It is that which defraies many a soul, that they are so indulgent to their own hearts, they are loth to fall out with them. And the truth is, many keep on in waies of enmity against God, because they are loth to fall out with their own hearts, we should be willing our hearts should be troubled at our selves, that the foundation of our peace, and quiet might

might by this be layd, and accomplished.

Help 4.

And then another way is this. Come in before God, even with a Rope about thy neck, and with Sackcloth upon thy loynes, cast thy self down before the Lord, and beseech him to write his own tears, give up thy heart unto God as it were a Blank, and pray the Lord to write his own Conditions, only that God might be at peace with thee. And if thou do'st so indeed, then manifest the truth of it thus. That if afterwards any temptation to any sin comes, or if thou beest cast upon any duty, and findest thy heart backward thereto, make use then of the disposition of thy heart: think thus: Was there not a time when I did seek to make my peace with God? was there not a time when I did cast my self before the Lord, and did then give up my self as a blank to God, and intreated him to write his own conditions? and now God requires this duty of me, and I am loth to come to it, O, I do not do now so as I said I would do when I was seeking for peace. Here is such a temptation to sin; O how opposite is this to that which I promised to God when I gave up my heart unto him. My Bretheren, I put this to you, either you have come into Gods preience, and as poor humbled soules have given up your hearts to God as Blanks for him to write his own reains upon; or you have not. If you have not; then you are not at peace with God, and so you may go away assured that you have nor done that great work which concerns you ten thousand times more than your breathing in the Ayre.

But you will say, I hope I have done this, I have been in my Closet giving up my heart as a Blank to God to write what Conditions he pleaseth, and I have professed to yield unto any terms.

Have you done so? Examine then the course of your lives, how answerable your actions are to such a thing.

You should do this at every fast, for every fast is their

ther to make peace, or to renew your peace. Now this is one work of a day of Attonement, to come in before the Lord and to yield your selves up unto him; and at the latter end of a day of fasting, to enter into Covenant with God, to give up your hearts unto God as a blank to write what he pleaseth. Either this must be done, or else you take Gods name in vaine. Now if you do this, or have done this in the uprightness of your hearts; then make use of this when any temptation comes, and say within your selves; O! this is suitable for one that hath given up his heart to God.

Help. 5.

O that we could now prize and make as present before us, what this peace will be to us at the day of Judgment, when the glorious appearing of the great God shall be; then you think it will be worth somewhat, labor now to make it to your hearts of as much worth as it will be then, endeavour to realize it now as it will be then. Certainly that is the reason there is no more stirrings of the hearts of men after their making up of peace with God, because they do not apprehend really what that peace will be worth another day. You have a precious Scripture in the 2. *Pet. 3. 14. Wherefore Beloved seeing we look for such things, be diligent that you be found of him in Peace.* Do you not believe that there will be a manifesting of the glorious God one day in another manner than ever he was manifested here in the world? Do you not look for such things? If you do, certainly you will be glad to be at peace with God, *Seeing you look for such things* (saith the Apostle) *be diligent that you may be found of him in Peace*; let this take up your thoughts as the greatest business that your hearts can be set upon, that you may be found of him in peace. Woe be to you if you be then found enemies to God; what will become of you, if you be not found of him in peace? it had been better for you, that you had never been born. But how found of him in peace? mark what follows,

L

without

without spot and blameless; this is the way to be at peace with God. But you will say, O Lord, if this be required as a way to be found of him in peace, that we should be without spot, and blameless, then we are undone, for who can be found of God without spot, and blameless? Yet you see, this is the word of God, and this is the truth of God, and truth must stand, it is a certain truth, that whosoever shall be found of God in peace when that glorious appearance of his shall be, he must be without spot, & blameless. If God find any one spot upon you, he will proceed against you as an enemy. But you will say, How is that? First in Christ, there the soul stands before the Lord without spot, clear in the point of justification: and likewise Evangelically it may be found so in Gods esteem, for God calls the uprightness of a mans heart perfection in other Scriptures. *Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect; and let us perfect holiness in the fear of God.* God looks so upon it, because God pardoneth all in Christ, & accepteth of beleevers in Christ; & so they are presented before him spotless, and blameless, and he gives them a heart too, to endeavor to wash away their spot, and blame; and so to walk blameless before the Lord, and before men. This is the way of coming to make your peace with God. And O! that the reading this Book might be a means that some soul might be reconciled unto God, that was an enemy to him before: O! that this scripture might be fulfilled in the bosomes of some souls. And thus, though but very briefly I have passed over the opening of this point of Reconciliation: with the excellencies, and the blessed fruits of it.

CHAP.

CHAP. 10.

God begins the work of Reconciliation with man.

Now the thing which I thought to have finished in this Chapter (but that not until the following Chapter) is this. That God is aforehand with his people in Reconciling himself, he begins the work. To wit (saith the text) that God was in Christ Reconciling the world &c. It is God that begins the work of Reconciliation, and if God did not begin it, certainly we should never be reconciled unto him. It is God first that begins to have any thoughts about Reconciliation, and if he should not have done it, we would never have thought on it, but have gone on desperate enemies to him all our lives.

Secondly, It is God that finds the way of Reconciliation, we could never think of a way, or if we did, we could never have found our a way.

Thirdly, It is God that begins to offer terms of Reconciliation, we would never go unto God, except God came unto us, such is the stoutness of our hearts.

Fourthly, It is God that must not only come once, but againe, and againe; after we have refused, God must begin again. Indeed amongst men, when an Inferior hath offended one that is above him, he wil say, let him come to me, if he wil. God doth not stand upon such terms, God doth not say, let man come unto me first, No, saith God, I wil go unto him. A man wil say, if he be the superior, I wil never trouble my thoughts about it; it shal come from him first. But God doth not say so, his thoughts hath been towards us, & that from eternity; the Lord from eternity hath had thoughts

of peace towards us, and he hath found out waies for it; and he comes first to offer it. But saith one that is offended with another; I have been content to yeild so far as to come to him, and to offer him Peace; but I wil never do it more; if ever there be any Reconciliation between us, I warrant you, he shal come to me the next time. God doth not say so to us; we were undone if he should; if God should come once, and offer peace to us, and upon our refusal should stand upon such terms as men do, and say, wel, I have offered peace once; but they shal begin next, or else there shal be no peace between us. No, saith God; though I have offered it once, and it hath been refused, I will offer it again.

Help. 3.

Yea further; God is fain first to yeild to his poor Creature. It may be man may be wrought so far as to say; I wil send to such a man the second time; but when they are at parly, and are together, you shall see them, (if one of them be superior to the other) stand upon this; who shal yeild first, and it wil be hard to bring the Superior to yeild. But God is not so. When we come to treat with God about our peace, and Reconciliation with him, though our hearts stand against it, yet God yeilds first. And for that you have a notable Text *Rom. 5. 10.* *If when we were enemies we were Reconciled unto God;* which Phrase doth plainly note, that God is first contented to yeild on his part: this is the infinite grace, and goddness towards man thus to begin with man in the point of Reconciliation.

CHAP.

CHAP. II

Uses of Gods beginning with man to be Reconciled.

Uſe. 1. Admire his goodneſſ in beginning, ſeing he had no need of us; and had ſo great advantage againſt us. Uſe. 2. Begin to ſeek peace even with our inferiours. Uſe. 3. The certainty of our ſalvation being reconciled. Uſe. 4. Not to be backward and hang off when God calls to duty.

A Fourth Particular propounded at the beginning of this treatiſe in the firſt chapter, is this. *That God begins firſt with man to be reconciled unto him. In this great work of making peace, it is God that begins it. God was in Chriſt Reconciling the world to himſelf. In which part of the verſe there are theſe four things further to be handled.*

First, That God begins the work. Secondly, That it is in Chriſt. Thirdly, That God was a doing of this, even from eternity. And Laſtly. That the Subject of this is the World.

There was a word or two, hinted of the firſt of theſe in the laſt chapter. It is God that begins the work of our Reconciliation; and if he had not begun, we would never have had thoughts of it, we would never have known how to have gone about to have reconciled our ſelves unto him, and although we could have known how to have done it, yet our ſtout, and ſtubborn hearts would never have yielded unto God; it is God that muſt begin the work. And he doth not onely begin with us, but indeed he continueth too: although he hath begun, yet if he do not go on; and after our rejecting being reconciled unto him the firſt, and ſecond, and third, and fourth time; if he ſhould not ſtil himſelf begin the work

a new

a new, again, and again, and again; we would never come to be reconciled unto him. I wil but only give you two or three passages by way of application; having treated somewhat of this already; and so pass on.

Use. I

First, Let us learn to admire the goodness of God to wretched man, his goodness that he should be pleased to begin this work of Reconciliation with us, for do but consider the infinite distance that is between God, and us. O! infinite goodness, that so great a God should begin with such a poor vild Creature as man is. Amongst men if one be but a little inferior to another, and if he be fallen out with him that is beneath him, he takes it in scorn for him to begin to make peace: No, saith he let him come to me, and seek me, if he wil. If God had stood upon such terms, all the Children of men would have been damned eternally. When God saw that we would perish for ever, and that we would never so much as have thought of being reconciled to him: O, then the bowels of his Compassion earned towards us; and saith he, I wil begin with them first, for I see they wil not begin. They indeed began to make the Breach, they began to sin against me and that wil be a second Consideration which makes the grace of God so much the more, that the breach is made on mans part: that all the wrong that is done, is on mans part. Amongst men, if one be great though he himself hath done the wrong, yet he expecteth his inferior should come and crouch unto him; but if his inferior have begun the quarrel, and have done the wrong he wil be sure then to stand it out, and expect that his inferior should seek after a Reconciliation with him. But here; behold, though we began the quarrel, though we had done all the wrong, and God never had done us any; yet so infinitely gracious is the Lord, that he begins first. *God was in Christ Reconciling the world to himself.*

Yae,

Yea, further, the Lord hath no need of us. Among men; if one falls out with another, he may happily say, wel, I see I shall have use of this man, I shall have need of him, for this and that business, or for such and such an employment, and upon this account, though he be his inferior (for superiors may have need of their inferiors); he is willing to be reconciled unto him; but God hath no such need of us, God can tel how to glorifie his own name, though we do all perish eternally: it is not for any use that God hath of us that he comes to begin the work of Reconciliation with us.

Besides, God hath us at infinite advantage to do with us what he pleaseth. Indeed a man perhaps will be willing to be reconciled with his enemy, because he sees it will cost him much to make his party good against him, it will put him to much trouble. But there is no such cause between God and us, for God hath us under his feet; for a man that hath gotten his enemy under his feet, and hath him at all the advantages that can be, for him to sue to him to be reconciled, you will say it is a rare thing, and where is there such a thing in the world? But behold, God doth this with us, though he have us at infinite advantage to do with us whatsoever he pleaseth, and can fetch out his glory from our ruine, and eternal misery; yet he begins the work of Reconciliation with us. Oh! admire the infinite grace of God toward wretched and sinfull man. This will be the work of the Angels in Heaven to all eternitie, to admire at Gods rich grace even in this one branch of the Gospel; his beginning the work of Reconciliation.

Use. 2.

And then, Another Use of it may be this. To teach us not to think much, but to begin to seek peace even with our inferiors; learn we by the example of God; that if there be falling out between one neighbor and another,

another, or between one friend and another, not to think much to begin the work of peace. We think it would be a dishonor for us to yeild so far; we say, what is he not my inferior, shal I send to him? Why, it is Gods glory to do it; God doth not only do it to us, but he accounts it his glory so to do. It is a great part of the glory of God that he is willing to yeild to us, and to send to us about terms of Reconciliation. And shal that which makes God to be glorious be accounted a dishonor to thee; shal it make thee unglorious, when it makes God to be glorious? If it be an excellency in God, suerly it is no baseness, no dishonour in thee. What a proud heart hast thou that thou shouldest think that that doth debase thee too much which makes God to be a glorious God, that that which doth set so much glory upon God, shoud in thy thoughts put dishonor upon thee, as if thy honor were to be higher than the honor of God himself: Certainly those men that are of such implacable dispositions at least they wil never yeild to begin to make up their peace with others, but they wil stand it out to the uttermost, though their consciences tell them, that they themselves have done a great deal of wrong, and that they could be willing there were a peace, only they wil not begin. This proud and stout spirit in men, is an argument that they have not been acquainted with Gods reconciling of himself unto them; for Gods beginning to be reconciled unto thee, wil make thee to begin reconciliation with thy inferior. You wil say, why should not he begin first? It is true why should he not, it is his duty indeed, and so it is our duty to begin with God: but suppose he doth not begin; thou shouldest rather pittie him, and look upon him in so much the more miserable Condition: and know that though thou hast the advantage of him, yet thou art to be like unto God in this particular.

USE 3.

Thirdly, A third Use of Gods beginning the work of Reconciliation with us; is the Use that the Apostle himself makes in *Rom. 5. 10.* *If when we were enmities to God we were reconciled unto him by the death of his Son; how much more being reconciled we shal be saved by his life:* here you see the Apostles inference upon Gods graciousness in himself; he being willing to be reconciled, when we were enemies; much more being reconciled we shal be saved: as if he should have said; al the goodness of God towards poor wretched sinful Creatures, when we were desperate enemies to him, and never thought of coming in to be reconciled unto him, yet the Lord himself finds out a way; and begins the work of making peace between him and our souls: surely then, being reconciled unto him, we shal be saved: What, shal God when we were a going on in a desperate way of enmity against him, shal this God come then to us, and have thoughts of peace and Love, and mercy to us? surely when we are reconciled, when we have hearts in some measure to love this God, and to serve, and fear him, he wil not cast us off; certainly no, it is better with us now than before. When we were enemies unto him, and desperate enemies, it had been then no wonder if God had cast us off, and sent us to our own places to lie for ever under the infinite burden of his wrath; but the Lord had then thoughts of peace towards us, it is therefore now far otherwise with us; though it is true, we have many corruptious in us, but we can appeal unto God that our Souls love him, and that the desire of our hearts are to fear, and serve him; we can in some measure be able to say; Lord, thou that knowest al things, knowest, that there is nothing in the world our Souls desire more than to overcome these Corruptions; there is no burden in al the world like unto the burden of

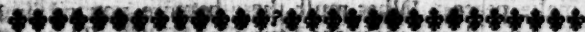
sin; there is nothing so grievous to us as this, that we have such vile hearts and natures that can serve him no better than we do; and if God should ask us what we would have from him, we can say in the sincerity of our souls; Lord thou knowest we would not ask Riches, or Honors, to be Kings, and Princes in the world; but Oh, that we might be delivered from the remayner of the corruption that is in our hearts, from such, and such distempers of our Souls whereby we dishonor thy name continually: Certainly if the hearts of men be in this disposition, they may gather a comfortable argument to themselves, and conclude thus: There was a time that I went on as a desperate enemy unto God, and I lived without God in the world, and never minded the power, and the majesty, and the Dominion of God over me, but as if I were born to nothing else but to sin against God; I followed my own lusts withal manner of greediness, but behold then, even at that time the Lord had thoughts of mercy towards me, and he took me perhaps when I came to the hearing of the word with a purpose to contemne, and despise it, and to jeer at it; yet at that very time he took me, and spake to my heart, and shewed me Jesus Christ, and his mercy, and then he broke my heart: now the Lord knows though when I come to the word I profit not as I should, yet I come with a heart desiring to profit; and I would fain know the mind of God in it; and before I come, I go to God, and desire him to shew me some part of his wil; Wil God now cast me off when being a desperate enemy to him he had thoughts of mercy towards me? wil he cast me off for those infirmities that I have now? I know I have not a heart opposite to that Grace, though I have a heart full of distempers: I am not an enemy unto God as I was before, and an enemy to his people, and ordinances; No, my heart is towards him, my heart is towards his people, and towards his Ordinances; and was God reconciled to me then, even whilst I was an enemy, and wil he now cast me off

for

for weaknesse; and infirmities? Certainly it cannot be. O make much of that place of the Apostle. *If when we were enemies unto God we were reconciled unto him; much more, saith he; certainly now God wil not cast us off, but we shal be saved.* That is a third use that we may make of Gods beginning the work of Reconciliation.

USE, 4.

A Fourth is this; Was God beginning with us, and did he so begin with us? then let not us be backward with God; let us not hang off in any duty when God calls us to do it, but presently come in; let it not be long before we perform any duty, let us not stand out, and defer with God, and say, I wil, and I wil hereafter: certainly that Soule that comes to understand the goodness of God, how God began with us in making of peace before ever we had thoughts of it; it will be a mighty argument to put the Soule on to make hast to the doing of any duty which God calls for, and to be speedy in the Service of God, because he was pleased at first to begin. But we pass that of Gods beginning to be reconciled unto us, and come to that which is indeed the main in this point of Reconciliation in the Text; and even the principal of al the Doctrines that are in the Gospel; *To wit, That God was in, Christ Reconciling the world to himself.*



CHAP. 13.

Doct. *Our Reconciliation with God is made in Christ. Seven things propounded for opening the Doctrine.*

YOU have read much of the blessedness of Reconciliation, what a happy condition it is to be at peace with

God, especially in these times of war, and trouble, when there is so little peace in the Land. And you have read that God begins the work. But how doth he do it? observe; it is not God merely considered as Creator of Heaven, and Earth, that infinite first being of all things; But (the first thing propounded in the first Chapter to be opened is this,) It is God [*in Christ*] reconciling him to the world. God and man were enemies; an enmity, and a breach there was, and the breach was infinitely wide, and dreadful; how shal God and man now come to be reconciled? you will say, the Lord is a God of infinite mercy, and he sees his poor creatures must needs perish eternally if he come to take advantage against them; therefore it may be God was willing to pass by all, and so free of himself, and his own free Grace to be reconciled to such, and such creatures as have sinned against him, and so Reconciliation was made up; No this was not the way, there is more required than this. Let God, and the creature be put together without any Further Consideration: and all the mercy of God on the one side; and all the Cries, and tears and repentings of the creature, on the other side, this will never make up a peace. This you must know is the Doctrine of the Gospel; that man having made a breach betwixt God, and himself, and consider God merely in himself, as he is himself, without relation to a Mediator; and then take all the mercy of God on one side, and all the tears, and repentings, the Cries and Prayers of the creature, on the other side; and both these together can never make peace. What must there be more, you will say? That which we have in the Text, God [*in Christ*] reconciling the world. It is not God in himself reconciling the world to himself, but it is God in Christ. So that there must come something between God, and us as to the matter of Reconciliation, or otherwise there can never be a Reconciliation made. This thing I have often had occasion to treat of; and I am very willing upon every occasion to set this before those that I am to preach unto;

for this is the great truth of the Gospel; and truly al our preaching should be, even to bring this truth home to the hearts of people; and whatsoever we preach, if it be not in order to this, we lose our labor, and God hath little glory from what we do, except it be in order to this; or as it may be some way a fruit of it. So then the point is this.

Dockt. Our Reconciliation with God is made in Christ. As we read of *Jonah* when the storms and tempests were in the Sea, and when the waves roared, and when the ship and the Marriners and al were like to be swallowed up, when *Jonah* was cast into the sea, presently there was a calm. So, the stormes, and tempests of Gods everlasting wrath are up against a Sinner, and the waves of that wrath are ready to swallow him up; But now Christ is cast into the heart of a man, and Christ being presented as one standing between God and man, al comes to be at a Calme. When the Disciples were upon the Sea, and the Sea troublesome, yet when Christ came, and rebuked the Sea, and the winds, all was stil. So when these are troubles of Conscience, nothing can rebuke those troubles of Conscience; nothing can bring in peace and quiet into the soul, but only Christ coming into the heart; God is [*in Christ*] reconciling the world to himself. There is nothing more plain in the Scripture than this; that it is God in Christ that reconciles the world to himself. It is evident enough in the text, but I will give you a Scripture, or two for it, and then proceed to the opening of the point. That place in *Rom. 5, 1.* is most clear; *Being justified by faith, we have peace with God; How? through our Lord Jesus Christ:* no peace with God, but through our Lord Jesus Christ. It is an easy matter for us to say so; but to apprehend the necessity of this, that it must be through our Lord Jesus Christ that we have peace with God; to apprehend this clearly, and thoroughly, it is a great matter; and those know much of the minde of God that know this experi-
know

mentally, and powerfully. In Eph. 2. 13. 14. *In Jesus Christ you that were far off are made nigh through his blood, for he is our peace.* This is spoken in two regards; he is our peace with God, it is apparent that it must be spoken in that regard, for so it follows in verse 18. *through him we have access unto the father*; but it is spoken of Christs being our peace in regard of uniting us to the Church of God, to be made one with the people of God; but no saith God here is a reconciliation, are conciliation with God, and then a union with the people of God, with the church of God; the partition wall is broken down through Christ; and those that were as dogs before, are now set up at the table: and there is a peace made between Gods people and us; for so Christ makes peace that way in taking away the enmity, that the people of God might be one together, as well as they are one with God. So in Collo. 1. 21, 22. *You that were sometimes alienated, and enemies in your mindes by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled; How? In the body of his flesh through death to present you holy, and blameless, and unreprouable in his sight*: and that in verse the 20. is remarkable for this purpose; *have (saith he) made peace, How? through the blood of his Cross by him to reconcile all things to himself: [by him]* I say: so that the Apostle would put an emphasis on this, that we are reconciled by Christ, *By him*, saith he: and he was not satisfied in saying of it once, but he repeateth it again, *by him*, I say, *whether they be things on Earth, or things in Heaven.* There are two difficulties in this Scripture. first in that it is said, God hath reconciled all things to himself in Christ; how doth God reconcile all things to himself in Christ? we are now speaking of reconciling those that shall be saved eternally; but here the Apostle speaks of reconciling of all things: God may be said to reconcile, not only Saints, but all things unto himself in this regard: In that all things were lyable to destruction through mans Sin; and it is in Christ, and through Christ that any thing

thing in the world is preserved in a good Condition. When you behold the Heavens, and the Earth, and the Sea, and all these things, and see the preservation of them in any good Condition; you must know it is all through Christ; and had it not been in regard of Christ, all things would have come to ruine, and confusion presently, and so God reconcileth all things to himself in Christ.

Further; All things are reconciled in Christ too, in this regard: In that now all things are through him come to be made Serviceable to those that are his Saints, and reconciled ones; and in that regard all things may be said to be reconciled to God; because they are reconciled to Gods friends; whereas before, all Creatures were enemies to us through Sin; and now through Christ they come to be made useful to us; and so unto God by us. A Second difficulty in this text is, How God hath by Christ reconciled all things in heaven; what things are there in Heaven that are Reconciled to God by Christ? We must understand that the things in Heaven that are said to be reconciled, are especially to be meant of the Angels. But you will say; How can the angels be reconciled to Christ, there was never a falling out, never an enmity between God and them? I Answer, That though in a proper sence, as reconciliation Concerns man, there is no reconciling of Angels unto God; yet because there is a neerer and a further and a more firm union made between God and the Angels through Jesus Christ than ever there was before or than ever there should have been, for ought we know, if Christ had not been; in that regard reconciliation may be said to be of things in Heaven; God and them being now by Christ more firmly made one, than ever they were before. And again though the Angels had never Sinned against God, and so were no actual enemies unto God; yet they were in a capacity of sinning, for they being but Creatures, they could not but be frail in themselves; and so lyable to fall from God,

God and to sin against him as well as those that did fall; therefore in regard of the establishment which they have now through Jesus Christ, because they are now confirmed in such a condition, that they are in an impossibility of falling from God, God having so taken them to himself, and they being so one with God, that they can never fall from him; in this regard also they may be said to be reconciled. For notwithstanding all the perfection of their Creation, they might have fallen into the same condition that those did that are now reserved in Chaynes to the Judgment of the great day. But now God hath so reconciled all things in Heaven by Jesus Christ, that the Angels themselves are more firmly made one with God than they were before. And further; the Lord doth receive them into a more intire affection of love, in, and by Jesus Christ, than he did before; the Lord looking upon the Angels, in and through Christ, there is a more through, firme, intimate intire affection of God towards them to establish them, and to accept of them in Jesus Christ. And besides they are reconciled to God, or unto us rather, because they are come to be our friends, whereas at first they were our enemies, so that in that regard there is a kind of Reconciliation; but because I conceive the text doth not so much intend that, we shall let it pass. Thus you see how God was in Christ reconciling to himself, even in some sense the very Angels themselves. This then is the first thing; the very thoughts that God had of entering into any tearmes, or parly with man about peace, is by Christ; that the Lords heart was inclined to man, it is from Christ; that the Lord would be willing to accept of any satisfaction, it is through Christ; that we have an access to God any way, it is through Christ. There is nothing from the one end of the work of Reconciliation to the other, but it is all through Christ.

For further opening of this great point, there are these things to be propounded.

First,

First, Briefly, to shew you the necessity of Christs coming in, in order to our Reconciliation with God, and likewise that it could be no other way, but by Christ.

Secondly, How Christ comes to be a fit Reconciler.

Thirdly, What it is that Christ hath engaged himself to, and performed according to his engagement for our Reconciliation.

Fourthly, How that which Christ hath done comes to be made over to us, and that we come to have the fruit of it for our Reconciliation with God.

Fifthly, The Consequences that flow from this; Namely, that our Reconciliation comes through Christ.

Sixthly, The reasons why God will be reconciled to us through his Son, rather than any other way. And

Lastly, To make some Application of all.

These particulars might hold us some time; but because we often meet with much of this Doctrine of Reconciliation, and have divers times before, and are likely, if God lengthen our opportunities stil to do it; therefore I intend to present al these seven particulars before you in a very short view.

CHAP. 13.

The necessity of Christs coming in, for our Reconciliation.

FOr the first, The necessity of Christs coming in for our Reconciliation; and surely this is that which is to be inculcated, and beaten upon you again & again, for you neither know God nor Christ, nor your own estates, except you know the necessity of Christs coming in to undertake in the work of Reconciliation. I suppose if we should ask any of you, how you hope to be saved;

N

you

you will presently answer, by Jesus Christ. But the understanding of the absolute necessity that there was of Christ's coming into to reconcile us, and God together, is not so ordinary; therefore I beseech you seriously weigh it. The necessity of it in a word is this: There was such a distance made between God, and his Creatures through sin, as did put a necessity upon a Mediator to come between; the distance was so great; for God being the infinite first being, and we being his Creatures, the distance must needs be great; it is sin that made the distance between God, and us; and that was so vast, and wide, that it did necessarily require a Mediator to come between, and especially upon this ground; because the Lord was resolved to have that wrong that was done unto him by the sin of man perfectly made up; sin had wronged God, and God was resolved upon it, he was set upon it to have this wrong completely made up, and that he himself would be perfectly righted; and this Gods Justice calls for; and thus stood the quarrel between God, and Man; Man having wronged God, and God and He are now at variance, and God stands upon it, and is resolved with himself thus; though I be willing to be at peace with them, yet I will be at peace with them, so as I will have the wrong that is done made up; my Justice shall be fully and completely satisfied; I must be righted, for I am God; and there shall not be such a flaw remaining in my Justice to eternity, as that such and such Creatures should sin against me, and I pass it by without having any satisfaction; for saith God, this would be a flaw in my Justice for ever, and that I will not have, and therefore I will be righted in that wrong that is done me by the sin of Man. It is true, when one man comes to treat about peace, and Reconciliation with another, it is sometimes necessary for him to pass by an offence without any satisfaction at all, especially when that poor Creature that hath offended is not able to make satisfaction; but it is not so between God and

Man; though one Man being at variance with another, when he sees that he that hath done him the wrong cannot make satisfaction, he then is indeed to pass it by; but Gods mercy did never work after that manner, though the mercy in a man may work him to such a Reconciliation, and though God be a God of infinite mercy, infinitely more merciful than any Creature can be, yet the way of the working of Gods mercy is a different way from the working of the Creatures mercy; neither doth it argue that there is not as much mercy in God as there is in the Creature; but that the way of the working of Gods mercy is different from that of the Creatures, and this is the way of the working of Gods mercy, not to pass by the wrong done, but to provide some means or other himself to satisfy that wrong, to the end that he may have his Justice satisfied; and because that this was necessary, hence it comes to pass of our being reconciled unto God through Jesus Christ. The necessity of Christs being a Mediator is not so much this, that we are grievous sinners, and so we have need of abundance of mercy from God; if there were nothing but these two only; that we are great sinners, and so have need of great mercy, there would not come a necessity of Christ; But we are great sinners, and we have need of the mercy of God, and the wrong that sin hath done unto God must be made up, and his Justice fully satisfied, and here comes in the necessity of a Christ. And thus God was Reconciling himself to the world in this regard. And the truth is, though some of you have heard the sound of this oftentimes; yet you must know, this is the great mystery of the Gospel, and by our presenting this unto you again, and again, perhaps God will give you a further insight into this truth; It is this that the Angels desire so much to pay more; they know this, that Gods Justice must be satisfied; but they know it not so, and so as the Church knows it, and as the Saints know it, and therefore they pay more, and more in our case, the further depths of it

as indeed there is greater and greater depths in this mystery which we can never fathom, and which is only reserved for the time of the Resurrection. Most people think, that when they are to seek for Reconciliation with God, they have to do with God only as a merciful God; But you must know when you have to do with God about Reconciliation, you have to do with more than with the mercy of God; ye have to do with God reconciling himself to the world in his Son, and you can never seek Reconciliation with God in a right Evangelical way, unless you seek it in his Son. That briefly shal suffice for the first; The necessity of Christs coming in to the work of Reconciliation.



CHAP. 14.

How Christ comes to be a fit Reconciler. Opened in seven Particulars; 1. Because he is the second person in the Trinity. 2. He hath taken our Nature on him. 3. He knows fully the mind of the Father. 4. He fully knows what will satisfy the Father. 5. God the Father doth infinitely Love him. 6. He never offended the Father. 7. What he doth hath infinite efficacy and worth.

THe second thing propounded in the twelfth Chapter is this. *How Christ comes to be a fit Reconciler; it is he who is the great Peace-maker; and therefore in the Scripture he is called the Prince of peace; it is he that is Melchizedeck, King of righteousness, and King of peace; But how comes he to be so? by being a Mediator between the Father and us; and so you shal find he is called in the Scripture. Heb. 8, 6. But he hath obtained a more Excellent Ministry by how much also he is the Mediator of a better Covenant, that is, of a Covenant of grace, and not of that covenant of works. Now Christ he is a fit mediator to come in, and to mediate between*

tween God, and us. As amongst men when there is a Breach between two, and they are at a Distance; the Breach is such as requires one to come in, and to mediate between them; It is not alwayes necessary between man and man where there is a Breath, that one should come and mediate; but there being a Breath between God, and us, it was absolutely necessary that a mediator should come in to treat between God and us, and there could never have been the least parly, the least treaty between God, and fallen man, had not a mediator stept in between and this mediator is Jesus Christ, and it is he that is only fit to be our Reconciler, and Peace-Maker.

1. Because he is the Second Person in Trinity, and in that regard he is fit.

You wil Say; How doth this make him fit? Thus; The Sin that was committed in the first transgression was more directly against the first Person, God the Father. Why, wil you say, was it against one Person rather than against another? It was indeed against them al, but it was more directly against the first Person; and this is the reason of it, because mans first sin was against that perfection which God gave him in his creation; against that created righteoussnes that was put into him which was especially the work of the first person in trinity; for Creation is attributed to the first person, and man sinning against that work of Creation, hence it comes to pass that the first is more directly, and immediatly offended. Now therefore the second Person in the Trinity, he comes next in Order, and therefore it is he that is fit to be a Reconciler between the father and us, because we having sinned against the work of Creation, God the father unto whom that worke is attributed, is more especially offended.

2 But not only so, for if he had been but only the second person; if he had been but only the Son of God, he could not have been the reconciler of us unto God, and therefore there must be somewhat else. When we ask you what Christ is; you Ordinarily answer the Son of God,

God : but if that had been al, if he had been only the Son of God, and the Second Person in Trinity, he could not (according to that way which God hath revealed in his word that he wil be reconciled unto Sinners by) have been a fit mediator for us. Therefore in the Second place, that he might be a fit mediator to make our peace, and to reconcile God, and us together, *he comes and takes our nature upon him, and is made a very man, so that the same Person is now God, and man* ; he having taken up the nature into a personal union with the Son of God ; so that he partakes of both those natures which is to be reconciled, observe it wel. Christ who is to be the Reconciler, his business is to reconcile God and man, between whom there was so vast a Breach. Now to the end that he might be fit for this work and reconcile these two, God and man, he partakes of both natures, and is become, by uniting the nature of man which he tooke to himselfe, into Personal union with the Godhead, both God, and man, and having the nature of them both, he hath interest in them both : he hath interest in God the father as being the same God coequal with the father, though not the same in a Personal regard, but the same God with the Father : and he hath interest likewise in man, as he hath the same nature with him ; and thus he partaking of God, and partaking of man, comes to have interest in both, and in that regard becomes a fit mediator between God and us. Here is the great work of God to reconcile man to himself ; and in this, God must do a work that is far greater than the making of Heaven, and the Earth. It had not been so great a work for God to have made ten thousand worlds over again, as for God to make a mediator to become God and man in one Person. The union of the two natures of Christ is the greatest work that ever God did from a eternity, or ever shal be done, and yet this was required to reconcile us to himself, and surely you may wel conclude, that the work of reconciliation of a sinner to God, is a greater business, seeing that

Heaven

Heaven and Earth must be moved about it; and that the greatest work that ever was done, or ever shall be done, must be done about this, or else it had never been effected. The Second person in Trinity must come, and take our Nature, and be made in the form of a Servant, that so he might be a fit peace-maker, or Mediator between God the Father and us. And then.

Thirdly, Christ is a fit Mediator in this; That he knows fully the mind of the Father; and thoroughly understands, even to the utmost what wrong the Father hath received by our sin. If one should come to Mediate between one Man, and another, and should desire the party offended to be at peace; He will say; you speak thus unto me; but do you know what wrong such a one hath done me? if you understood the wrong he hath done me, surely you would not think it so easie a matter for me to be at peace; and the truth is, if all the Angels in Heaven, and all the men in the world should come to interpose, and to make peace between God, and any sinner for any one sin; God would presently Answer them, and say, what do you do to come to undertake this work of making peace with me and a sinner; alas you do not understand what wrong is done unto me by his sin; you know not what injury I have received by his sin, therefore you are not a fit party to be a Mediator. And in this regard no Angel in Heaven could possibly be a fit Peace-maker between God and Man, for they know not what wrong sin hath done unto God; But Jesus Christ knows to the utmost, he understands thoroughly, and fully all the wrong, and injury that is done unto the Father by the sin of Man; he knows what prejudice his Father sustained by all the sins of all the men of the world, which no Creature else, Angels, nor Men could ever do. Nay, they are so far from knowing the wrong that is done to God by the sin of the world, as they are not able to understand the wrong that is done unto God by one of the least sins that can be committed.

Fourthly,

Fourthly, Christ is a fit Mediator; because he fully knew what would please and satisfie his father. If a man should come, to be a mediator, to reconcile two that are at difference, if indeed he knew the mind of the Party offended fully and throughly, we would rather chuse such a man to make up the Breach, such a man indeed that doth understand to a hair what wil satisfie the offended Party is fit to be a Mediator. All the Angels in Heaven do not know like unto Jesus Christ, fully, and throughly the mind of God, or what it is that wil satisfie him: it is onely Jesus Christ who was with the father, and lay in his very bosom from all eternity, that knows fully what wil satisfie the wrong that is done to the father, and therefore he alone was fittest to undertake this work.

Fifthly, Christ is a fit Mediator in this, That God the father doth infinitely love him, that he is infinitely dear to the father, and you know that it is a special ingredient for those to have that are to be Reconcilers, that they should be dear one to another, especially dear to the party that is offended. If a poor man hath offended a rich man in a Town, and he saith within himself, O! that I were reconciled unto such a one. If he can get one that is the intimate friend that that rich man hath in all the world to speak unto him in his behalf, he wil conclude, that certainly the business that have good success, and that this friend wil prevail. Thus it is with our Mediator: he who is our Reconciler unto God, is infinitely dear unto the father, God the father doth infinitely delight in him; and therefore whatsoeuer he shall say, or do, must needs infinitely please God the father. This is our Mediator who is come to reconcile us unto God, he can say, and do nothing but it shall infinitely please, and delight the father.

Further, He is one that never did offend. There may be a friend that is very dear to the party offended, and yet perhaps he himself hath offended the Party.

But

But Jesus Christ is one that never offended the father, but hath pleased him from all eternity, and therefore he is a fit mediator, he is fit to Speake for those that have displeased him. As in a family, if a Child have offended, and another Child come and speake for his Brother, the father may answer, you need speke for your self for you have offended as wel as he: But if another child that never offended his father in al his life, but hath been the most obedient Child that can be in the world, shal come, and speake, this wil be likely to take with the Father much. God the Father professeth before al the world, that Jesus Christ is his Beloved Son in whom he is wel pleased; and it is this Christ that stands up to speake to God the Father for poore Sinners to be reconciled unto him.

Lastly he is a fit mediator in this; That whatsoever he shal do hath an infinit efficacy in it selfe: not only is he a fit mediator because God is wel pleased with him; but because that whatsoever he shal lay doune by way of satisfaction, it hath an infinit value in it. There is such an infinite price such an infinit worth in whatsoever Christ lays down to purchase this reconciliation, that the infinite Justice of God cannot but say, this is indeed a valuable Consideration, and I cannot but acknowledge there is efficacy, and sufficiency enough in this to make up a full Satisfaction had the Sinns of men been a thousand times more than they were.

Now, what a mediator have we to reconcile us unto God; how comes our sins to make such a breach between God, and us? but because our sins were against such an infinite God at first; the Person against whom we have sinned is the cause which makes such a breach; and so the Person who is mediator, that shal do and suffer any thing for us being such a person as he is; hence comes the efficacy of al that he shal doe, and suffer to satisfy the father to the utmost groat. Al this together, namely Christ that is the Second Person, who is God, and man,

O

Who

Who knows the minde of the father to the ful. Who knows what wrong our Sins have done the Father. Who knows what wil satisfie the Father. Who never offended the father. Who is infinitely beloved of the father. All these together makes it, that whatsoever he doth hath an infinite efficacy to satisfie Justice it selfe; and in this regard he comes to be a fit mediator. All these things I name the rather to incourage the heart of poore Sinners to come unto him; seing it is God in Christ that reconcileth us to himselfe.



CHAp. 15.

What Christ hath undertaken and performed in Our Reconciliation 1. to satisfy Gods Justice 2. To bring our hearts and subdue them to God.

You wil say; you have shewed us these two things; that it is not God alone, and us, but in Christ, and us, that is reconciled. And you have shewd us what a reconciler Christ is. And how fit. But for the third thing propounded in the 12: Chapter, hath Christ undertaken to reconcile us? Surely this is a great work to come and reconcile Sinful man unto God; Christ must needs undertake much in this? I wil declare to you what Christ hath undertaken.

1 This a grement there is between Christ and the Father, *He hath undertaken that he wil Satisfie what ever his Fathers Justice shal requier.* As for example. If one should come to mak a peace between a couple, and the one party hath extreamly injured the other, and he that comes to make peace; he doth not only come and say, Sir I beceech you for my sake, pass by the wrong, and be reconciled unto him, though perhaps this may do much but this wil not do the deed; and this is not the way of reconciling

reconciling God and us, for Christ (though he be dear to the father) only to plead, and say, O father these poor Creatures have offended thee, I beseech the O father, be reconciled to them; no this is not al. But saith the Party offended; wil you undertake to satisfie the wrong that is done me? I saith he, who is the Peacemaker, I wil undertake it al; you shal set it al upon my scor. And certainly you wil al conclude, that if he that comes to be mediator, and is dear unto the Party offended, shal not only intreat, but undertake, that whatsoever he would have of him, requier what satisfaction soever he wil, he wil undertake to under goe it al, especially if he be a man able to do what he promifeth: You wil al conclude that this wil surly make up apeace. This is the transaction between God the Father, and the Son. God lookes upon man as being an enemy to him, and Christ he comes to mediate, yea, but saith the father; what wil you do to make peace, wil you undertake for mankind, wil you ingage to Satisfy that wrong that they have done me? Yes O Father saith Christ, I wil do it, I wil stand between the and them, and undertake for them to satisfie al whatsoever thy Justice can require. And in this regard Christ is not only called a mediator in that place Heb. 8. 5. and to forward; but he is called a Suerty, because he hath undertaken to Satisfie what God the father required for the Sin of mankind; and as he hath undertaken it; so he hath done it now, and the fathers that lived in former times might looke upon God reconciling himselfe to the world in Christ, as Christ had undertaken it, but not fully discharged it. But we may look upon Christ, not only as an undertaker, but as one that hath discharged, and paid al.

2 But that is not al; Christ hath not only undertaken this; but in the next place, as he hath undertaken to satisfie God on his part; but saith the Father; what shal become of these poor Creatures; they have hearts opposite to me, and they are enemies to me, and whatsoever

you do, they wil stil go on in waies of enmity to me &c. No, saith Christ; I wil do more then this, I wil undertake to bring them in to you, and to subdue their hearts to you; and where as they are now enemies to you; they shal come, and submit themselves; and that wicked Nature of theirs, I wil yake away through my spirit, and I wil both bring them into a peaceable disposition towards you; so that they shal love you as a friend; and love al that belong unto you; they shal love al your waies, and love your people, and love your holyness; I wil undertake to bring them in to you, as wel as to satisfie you for what they have done. This is appearent; for in the Scripture where ever there is any speaking of Reconciliation, you have mention of our being reconciled to God; as wel as Gods being reconciled to us; and indeed the Scripture doth make more mention of our Reconciling being enemies to God, than of any thing of Gods working Reconciliation for us. And that place that I quoted before in the Collosians, is exceeding cleer for this; namely, that Christ hath undertaken for our Reconciliation; for you heard before in, Collo. 1. 20. *That he had made peace through the blood of his Cross*; He hath undertaken to satisfie; and the undertaking of it cost him his blood; our Reconciliation cost Christs death. But then in verse 21. He saith further; *You that were sometimes alienated, and enemies in your minds by wicked works*, so it is in your Books; but in the Original, it is; *Enemies in your minds [in] wicked works*; not that you came to be enemies by your works, for that is the advantage indeede that the adversaries have, and say; it is not a sinful Nature in us, but we come by action to act wicked habits; but it is, you are enemies in your minds in works; that is, you did lay out al the enmity of your minds against God; you have natural enmity in your minds against God: and in your minds you do lay out; and improve this strength of your enmity in your wicked works

works against God; But saith he you that were thus alienated, and enemies in your minds in wicked works, he hath reconciled, to present you holy, and unblameable, and inreprovable in his sight. Here are two waies by which Christ reconciles us unto God; he hath reconciled us by the blood of his Crofs; and then in the Body of his flesh through death to present us holy, and unblamable, and unreprovable in his sight; he hath undertaken this latter, as well as that other; and he hath undertaken, that we shal not remain enemies unto God eternally, but that there shal be a time when we shal be brought in to God, and have gracious dispositions put into us, so as we shal become friends unto God, and friends unto al that are Gods. There are many that speak much of Christ in regard of his satisfaction, and what the transaction was between God and him; and they think that because Christ hath undertaken to satisfy Gods wrath, what need we care for any thing? what is it, though we live as we list? it is to no purpose what we do, whether we do ill, or whether we do well, for Christ hath done al in the work of Reconciliation. But my Brethren see the mistake: Christ hath not only undertaken satisfaction, and to reconcile God unto us; but he hath undertaken with God the Father likewise to reconcile us unto him; not to satisfy God alone, but to bring us into a gracious strain, and disposition of heart likewise; and therefore except Christ do both, the truth is he doth neither; It is true the one may be done from al eternity; Christ may undertake the one, and undertake that he wil do the other also; but until Christ hath actually done the other, thou canst not conclude, that he hath done the former. That man that perswades himself that Jesus Christ hath done the former, whenas he hath not done the latter deceiveth himself; and therefore to beleve in Christ as a Reconciler, is to beleve in Christ as undertaking these two things. First undertaking with God the Father to make

make satisfaction unto him. And then Secondly undertaking for us, to bring us in to the Father likewise : and as Christ must do the one, as well as the other ; so he wil be as faithfull in the performing the Second, as he was in the undertaking, and dischargeing the First. Few people think of this, they think much of Christs undertaking to satisfie Gods Justice, and so to Reconcile them unto God ; but they have seldome thoughts of this, that Christ hath also undertaken to chang their hearts, and to make them friends unto God. But you that go on in wicked works being enemies to God in your minds in wicked works, perhaps you think God wil be Reconciled unto you through Christ, and when you die you shal be saved through him. Remember this point. That Christ the Reconciler hath undertaken with God the Father both to satisfie his Justice, and to subdue your hearts, so that you shal no longer be enemies unto him ; and therefore if Chist have not done the other, in your hearts, it is an evident argument, that for ought that yet appears he never undertook to satisfie the Justice of God for you. O ! what an argument is here, for men to be restless, and unquiet in their natural condition ; You that go on in a sinful, and & ungodly way, you may certainly know, that there is for the present no evidence that Jesus Christ hath undertaken with the Father to make any Reconciliation for you, for if he had, he hath also undertaken on your parts to bring in your hearts to the Father and to make you friends with him, as wel as him friends with you. On the other side, any of you that find the work of the Spirit in your hearts, that begin to find Christ subduing your hearts unto God ; that whereas heretofore you did live in waies of enmity unto God, but now you begin to find the power of Christ in his word beating down those proud hearts of yours, you find Christ changing of your minds, and so bringing of your hearts into subjection unto God ; Bless God for this, and know that this

this is part of Christs undertaking with God the Father, and in that he doth this in your hearts, it is an Evidence that he hath undertaken to satisfie Gods Justice for all your sins. Thus you see how Christ is a Reconciler, and Mediator.



CHAP. 16.

How what Christ hath done for Our Reconciliation, come to be made Ours. 1. Christ the head of the second Covenant.

There is a fourth thing which I propounded in the twelfth Chapter; and that is, How we come to be reconciled to God in Christ; It is true, Christ hath done it you see: But how do we come to have what Christ hath done made ours, that so we may be reconciled unto God?

In a word thus. Christ is looked upon by God the Father as the Head of the Second Covenant, and so we are looked upon in him as Covenanters, and as joyned together in one body in him: this is the way of Christs Reconciling God & us, & the way of the Conveyance of all the fruits of that Reconciliation unto us. This is the Council of God concerning the Children of men, that they may come to be reconciled, and saved. As his Son hath undertaken the thing; so it is not only, that he should stand between the Father and us. Its remarkable there must be a Union between him, and us, and he must present us to God the the Father as one Body with himself, and the Father must look upon him as the Head of a Covenant to which we belong likewise: So that his obedience, and suffering is to be looked upon now; not as done by a private person; But looked upon as the obedience, and suffering of a publick Person, of one

one that Bears our Names before God the Father. And herein there is a further mystery of godlines. The reconciliarion between man, and man, is only when one that is a stranger, comes and stands between, and mediateth; there is not required such a union between him that he mediateth for, and himselfe. But Christ comes not in meerly as a third person between God and us, but he comes to take our very natures upon him, and we are made one in the covenant of grace he as the Head, and we as the members. That look as Adam stood before God as the Head of the first Covenant of works, and so we were al looked upon at first in him, and dyed in him: So Christ who is called the Second Adam stands before the Lord as the Head of the Second Covenant and al those that he doth mediate for, and whom he doth seek to reconcile to the father, stand al before the father in him; so that his work is imputed to be theirs, and the Lord looketh upon them in their Head: fulfilling that Second Covenant of life, and peace that he hath made with poor creatures in him. So that you must not only look upon Christ to be a Saviour, as the Son of God in Heaven; but if you would look upon him with comfort, you must look upon him as the head of a second Covenant, and upon your selves joyned with him as members of him and so presented unto the father through him. Thus God was in Christ reconciling himself to the world, God looking upon Christ, and through Christ, as the head of the Covenant of grace; upon al those that Christ did undertake for, as Covenanters Joyned together with him, comes to be reconciled to al those which shal be everlastingly Saved. This is the mystery of the Gospel, God in Christ reconciling the world to himself. What Christ was hath been opened. And what Christ hath undertaken, and how God looks upon us through this mediator. These things you must search into, and cry unto God that by his Spirit he whuld open these mysteries of the Gospel unto you, and then

then you shal see much of the mystery of grace, and of the minde of god; and so come to have abundance of peace with God, notwithstanding al the present remainders of uncleannes that are in your hearts.

CHAP. 17.

How we come to have intrest in what Christ hath done is further opened:

WE have shewed in the former chapter what Christ doth for the Continuance of this peace between God, and us: that he is at the right hand of God, there making intercession for the Saints continually; so that if ther be any thing, that might (in its own nature) break the peace between God, and us; this our mediator sits at the right hand of the Father, and there (by his intercession) he continually presents himself for the removing of it, and for the continuance of the peace between God and us; that there may no Breach fal out, for the time to come; this I say Christ undertakes to do, and this is a special work of his Mediation; namely, his being Continually at the right hand of the Father, and there presenting himselfe unto God for the keeping, and maintaining of this peace, which he hath made between the Father, and us.

Again; if it be demanded; how we come to have an Intrest in this that Christ doth; (which was the fourth thing propounded in the twelfth chapter) in his Satisfaction, in al that he undertakes?

The Answer was this: That Christ is made the Head of a second Covenant; for, as the foundation of the Breach, that was between God and us at the first came by the first man Adam, who was the Head of the first Covenant, in whom we al Sinned, and so turned eni-

es unto God: So Jesus Christ is made a Second Adam, and the head of a Second Covenant; and al those that are looked upon as the posterity of the Second Adam, (for so it must be) they are looked upon as one in him. As al that were of the posterity of the first Adam were looked upon as one man in him, and so the Breach was made, and enmity came between God, and al that one mans posterity: so, al that are to be of the Posterity of the Second Adam, that are either actually of him, or are to be born of him by a Spiritual generation, (which in the Scripture is tearmed Regeneration); al those are looked upon as one with him: and hence it is that in the 1. Cor. 15. 47. the Apostle speakes of the first, and second Adam as if there were no more but two men in the world, for indeed ther are no more in that sense; nor ever were. The first man (saith the apostle) is of the Earth, Earthly; the second man is the Lord from Heaven, Heavenly. here is the first man, and the Second man. Why, you wil say, are there but two men in the world? No, not in that sense; that is, there were never but two men that did represent al others; and under those two men are al other men in the world represented before God. Al the children of men that sel from God, the are represented in the first *Adam*, who was the Head of the first Covenant, and they stand under that covenant: And al those that God intends to be reconciled unto, and to glorifie; they are represented before God in the second *Adam* who is the Head of the Second Covenant. It is true, if we speake properly; *Caine* was in order the second man in the world; but Christ is the Second man; that is, the Head of a second Covenant, the Second man that God did enter into the Covenant withal for other men, and in that sense he alone was the second man: As in the same sense *Adam* is called the first man so that God is Reconciled to the world in Christ; that is, as in the first *Adam*, the Breach was made between God, and man: so in the second

cond *Adam* Reconciliation is made between God, and man. And as God imputeth that which the first *Adam* did, to his Posterity for Condemnation : so that which the Second *Adam* did, he doth impute to the Posterity of that Second *Adam* for life, and Reconciliati^on. And that you have more largely disc^ussed in the most part of the fift Chapter of the *Rom.* especially from the middle of the Chapter to the end.



CHAP. 18.

Eight Consequences of Our Reconciliation being made in Christ. 1. *It is a deep Mystery.* 2. *It is very free.* 3. *It is sure and certain.* 4. *It is full.* 5. *It is an honorable way.* 6. *Yet in such a way as doth debase man.* 7. *It is firm and everlasting.* 8. *This Reconciliation was a very difficult work.*

THere are yet the Fift, and Sixt, particulars mentioned in the Twelfth Chapter that follow in the Explication of this point of Reconciliati^on with God in Christ, and when we have done them we shal come to the Application of all the six things.

And the Fift is, some Consequences that follow from what hath been spoken. for if we be Reconciled to God in Christ, we may from thence draw diverse Cosequences; I shall not now do it by way of Appli^cation, but only shew you how such Consequences as I shal name do naturally flow from what hath been said. For if, the Reconconciliati^on between God and us be in Christ then there are these particulars of it; and these things may be said concerning it.

Consequence.

Consequence. 1.

First, Hence it followeth, that the Reconciliation of the Children of men with God, is a very great and deep mystery, it is not a thing that can ordinarily be understood, it is not a thing that is wrought in a natural way. But to reconcile any soul unto God, is done in a way that is most deep, and hidden, and is (of it self) a most glorious Mystery. And therefore when the Scripture speaks of our Reconciliation with God in Jesus Christ; it tels us, that it is the hidden Wisdom of God, 1 Cor. 2. 7. *We speak the Wisdom of God in a Mystery, even the hidden Wisdom which God ordered before the World to our glory.* It speaks of the very same thing, that my Text speaks of; viz. *That God was Reconciling the world to himself in Jesus Christ,* and this he saith was the Wisdom of God in a Mystery the hidden Wisdom which God ordered before the world to our glory. And then again, verse. 10. *God hath revealed them to us by his Spirit;* the particle [them] is not in the Greek, but only thus. *God hath revealed to us by his Spirit;* that is, *This Mystery,* for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. That is the first thing that followeth. It is a Mystery.

Consequence. 2.

The Second is this. Hence our Reconciliation with God is very free, it is a work of free grace; it is reconciling himself in Christ; it is not reconciling himself to us: for what we do our selves, or for what we can do; No, there is nothing that we do, or can do, nothing that Angels do or can do for us, that can reconcile us unto God, but we are reconciled unto God in Christ; therefore the work of Reconciliation of us is nothing but free grace, we do not contribute any thing at al unto this great work, it is al done in Christ; it is altogether free. If there

there be anything required of us, yet it must be God and Christ that must work it; all, every thing of our Reconciliation (whatsoever particular there is in it) it is al in Christ, and therefore altogether free Grace towards us; Christ is the guist of God, and every thing that is indeed in him, and by him, is a free guist to us. That is the Second thing that may be said of this Reconciliation, that it is free.

Consequence. 3

The third thing that may be said of it, is this; That it is sure and certain, there is a certainty, a sureness of this Reconciliation; Why? Because God hath wrought so strangely about the work, and he would never work so strangely about such a work but he would have it come to somewhat; he would not have this work (after he hath done all) to vanish. Those indeed that hold the Doctrine of free wil, and say, that indeed there is a price payd upon condition if we do beleeve, but we are left to our selves, either to beleeve or not beleeve, and God onely propounds the means; What do they teach but thus much? That after al the Councils of God that are wrought for our Reconciliation, and after those great things which God hath done for us in Christ, it is in the power of man to make al to be void and of none effect, and that there should not be any one man in the world reconciled at last; for it must needs follow, that if it be left to man to beleeve or not to beleeve, and that it is in his power whether he wil or not; then it is in his power likewise to make al the Councils of God, and the great works of God in Christ to be of none effect at al; that after God hath from al eternity plotted the work, and sent his own Son into the world to be made a Curse for the sin of man, to die & to make al that ado, & al that work about the matter of Reconciliation, & Atonement; yet, (if that Doctrine were true which is a Belzebub error a false Do-
ctrine

ctrine of the greatest magnitude) it had been possible, that (notwithstanding the doing of al this) all had been lost, and Christ might have dyed in vain, and not one soul in the world saved; I say this must needs follow upon that Doctrine. But now if that we hear that there is so much done, as there is for the making up of our peace & Reconciliation with God; then on the other side, this must necessarily follow, & certainly be concluded on, that there are some that are to be reconciled to God, and that this work shal never be lost; God wil never plot so great a work, and send his Son into the world to do so much as he did for the sin of man, and at last suffer it al to be lost; but he wil certainly bring some unto salvation. I confesse, when a poor sinner, that is made sensible of what sin is, and of the Breach that sin hath made between him, and God; when he thinks of the greatness of the work, what it is to be reconciled unto God, he trembles, and shaketh in himself, fearing it were to good news to be true, and least it were not certain and sure. Yea, but when he comes to understand what God hath done for the accomplishment of that work, how God not only hath promised it; but we can say now, that it is done, that the Lord hath indeed sent his Son into the world and that he is made man, and that he hath been under the Curse of God for mans sin, and he hath been Crucified dead and buried, and is ascended into Heaven, and sits at the right hand of the father, and al those glorious Mysteries of the Gospel (spoken of in the Old Testament) are now fulfilled, and accomplished; when a sinner comes to understand this, O! then he thinks, surely there is a certainty a sureness in this work of Reconciliation with God. And as when *Jacob* heard that *Joseph* his Son (whom he loved) was yet alive, the Text saith, the heart of the old man failed, he did not beleeve it, he thought it was too good to be true; But when his other Sons came and shewed him the Charriots that *Joseph* had sent, and gave him

him such real demonstration of the thing; not only that he was a live, but that he was the greatest man in *Egypt*, and next unto *Pharaoh* himselfe; then the text saith; *that the Spirit of Jacob revived, and he said, is Joseph my sone a live? I have enough:* So when a Sinner that comes to be made sensible of the evil of sin, and the greatnes, and widenes of that Breath that is between God and him; when he comes and hears one preach of the Doctrine of Reconciliation, and of Atonement between God and the Soul, and how that al his Sins may be pardoned, and God may become an intire frind unto him, and he come to be saved, and glorified eternally in the highest Heavens: The hearts of a poore Sinner begins to fail; but when he can tel him what great things God hath done to bring this work about; that God hath in his infinite wisdom found out such a glorious way for reconciliation, that he hath sent his son, and he is become man, and hath been under the wrath of his father, and Satisfied for mans Sin, and died, and shed his blood, and is now ascended into Heaven, and is at the right hand of the Father, and an Advocate, and an intercessor; upon this, the sinner may come to beleve that there is a reallity in the thing, a Certainty in this worke of reconciliation. My Brethren, the work of reconciliation, is a Sure thing indeed: it is not a notion, fancy, or an imagination, but there is a reallity, and a certainty in it; and al this follows from hence; that it is [*in Christ:*] we could never be so certain of the thing, except we had these real demonstrations of Gods heart towards us. Suppose God had sent an Angel from Heaven to preach to the Children of men the Doctrine of reconciliation, and to tel them, that God was willing to be reconciled unto them; alas, this could never be made out to be so Certain unto them; but still the hearts of poore Siners would have been afraid, and would have thought, surly whatsoever is said unto us, is but a little to quiet us for the present; certainly the

matter

mater is not so, as it is declared unto us, this would not have been so certain, though an Angel from Heaven had declared it; but when God shal please to give this evidence to us of his heart being towards us, and of his willingnes to be reconciled unto us, that he hath wrought so strangely for us in sending the second Person in trinity to be made man, and him to do thus, and thus to worke out this work of Reconciliation: Upon this we may come certainly to conclude: that the heart of God is real in the wo.k. In Rom: 4. 16. we have an expression to this purpose; therefore it is of faith faith the Apostle: it is: what is that? that is the promise of life and peace; for of that the Apostle is speaking in that place: It is of faith; why? *that it might be by grace*, so the end the promise might be sure. Mark here these two properties of our reconciliation with God, Wee are reconciled in Christ. Upon that, first it follows that it is a great mistry. And then secondly, that therefore it is free; [therefore] (saith he) it is of faith that it might be free. It is of faith; as if he should say; it is from God in Christ; for faith doth relate alwaies unto Christ: It is of faith; that is of faith in Christ: that it might be by grace. as if it had not been by faith; if it were by any works that we should do, then it were not free; it were not by grace; but it is by faith in Christ, that it might be by grace. And then secondly: it is of faith in Christ, to the end that the promise might be sure you wil say: would it not be suer though it had not been by faith? suppose God had only sent an Angel (as I hinted before) would it not have been sure? No, not so sure as now it is; for in that it is by faith upon Christ, we have Christ to pitch upon as the Object of our faith for our reconciliation with God, and by that it comes to be more sure then it cold be by any other way. We cannot conceive that it were possible for the Lord by any way to reveale the reallity of his heart, and the certainty of his work in reconciling the world to himself so as by this means, in that he hath reavled it to be in Christ

Christ. And that is the Third thing that follows from it.

Consequence. 4.

The Fourth thing from thence is this. That if it be in Christ, then as it is sure; so it is full. Indeed were it in any other way that God did reveal Reconciliation to us then in Christ, we might be afraid that there were something in the heart of God against it, that the heart of God did not fully close with us, & to be fully Reconciled with us: but when we hear what God hath done to Reconcile us to himself; what a price he hath paid for it, what cost he hath been at to accomplish it, and that his own Son hath undertaken to bring us and the Father together, and so to make up this Reconciliation; then we may conclude it a full, and perfect Reconciliation. Jesus Christ would never undertake such a work, but he would Compleat it, and he hath Completed it; and therefore when you hear this word of the Gospel that we are Reconciled to God in Christ, we may conclude, that the work is a full, and a compleat work, because it is done in him. That is another Consequence.

Consequence. 5.

Further, if the Reconciliation we have with God be in Christ: hence in the Fifth place it follows, that God is Reconciled unto man upon very honorable terms, it is an honorable Reconciliation, for it is such a Reconciliation wherein God suffers nothing at all, but he hath all made up. If God had come, and only passed by our offences, and so had been reconciled to us without any more ado, the Devils perhaps might have cried out against him, and have said: Where is the glory of thy Justice? these have sinned against thee as well as we, and the Breach they have made upon thy Justice is no way made up; thou hast been by them dishonored, and that

Q

dishonor

dishonor that thou hast received by them, is no way answered. But now, Man being reconciled to God in Christ; none of the Devils in Hell can speak against Gods Justice, or against his Righteousness; for as God is Reconciled, so he is Reconciled upon honorable terms. Indeed a man that hath an inferior who hath offended him, when he can see no other way to help himself; but that he must put up all the wrong, and injury that hath bin done him. It is a far different thing, then to be reconciled to the party offending upon honorable terms; for if he could come to have this wrong made up again, and not only he that hath offended come to submit himself to him but all the injury that he hath done him fully satisfied; this were honorable. So is the Reconciliation between God and us, it is, so honorable a Reconciliation, that it will be the glory of God before the Angels, and Saints to all Eternity and it is that which God doth much rejoyce in as being exceedingly pleased with it, seeing his honor is made up in this Reconciliation. That is a fifth Consequence from hence.

Consequence. 6.

Sixty: Followeth this; If we be reconciled to God in Christ, Hence our Reconciliation is in such a way as doth altogether debase man; and though it be upon honorable terms; yet it is in a way, wherein man hath no cause to glory in himselfe: It is the greatest way for the lowing and humbling of man that possibly can be there could be no way devised, wherein man should be reconciled to God, and yet be abased in much, as he is in this way of Reconciliation, when he truly Considereth it. For it is true, we are reconciled; but how? we began it not our selves, we did nothing in it, ourselves, it was done by Christ, therefore is *Pharm* *at* *291* *saith* the *Apostle*, *wherein* *is* *hauing* *in* *him* *exclusiue* *by* *his* *own* *Law* *of* *works* *no*, but by the *Law* of *Grace*. God

reconcileth

(indeed)

(indeed) hath done great things for us; but all that which is done for us, is not thankworthy to our selves; it was all done without us. God was [in Christ] Reconciling the world, to himself; and therefore though it is in honorable terms (in respect of God) yet, when we seriously Consider of it, we have ground, and Cause sufficient to be abased in our selves; even to the very dust. And then.

Consequence, 7.

Yet further. Our Reconciliation being in Christ; Hence it follows: That it is a most firme, and lasting Reconciliation, an everlasting Reconciliation; as it is in Christ, here is the ground of the Everlastingness of it; Hence it is, that there is nothing can make a Breach again between God, and us; so as we should become Enemies againe unto him; so that when we understand this Reconciliation with these properties, and Consequences; then we understand aright what it is to be Reconciled unto God.

Consequence 8.

There is one Consequence or property more of this Reconciliation that I must add to what I mentioned before. And that is this. That if it be in Christ that we are Reconciled unto God: Then certainly the work of Reconciliation is a very difficult work; it is a mighty hard thing; Heaven, and Earth must be moved before this can be done, and God even shakes the Heaven and the Earth in this work. It was the difficultest work that ever God himself undertooke; and the difficultest work the Son undertook; for when he undertook it; you find that he did sweat at it, and before he had done it, it cost him his very hearts blood; therefore it was not an ordinary and slight work to reconcile God & man together,

together, but a most difficult work, because it was in Christ.



CHAP. 19.

Three Reasons why God would be Reconciled to the world in Christ and no other way. 1. Because God the Son is most glorified this way. 2. Because God the Father is most glorified this way. 3. Because there was no such way as this to melt the hearts of sinners. Or to encourage them to come to God.

BUT there yet remains to shew you the Reasons Why God would Reconcile himself to the world this way in Christ, and no other way. And for that I shal only give you these Three Reasons,

Reason. 1.

First, Because in this way the Father glorified his Son; had it not been for this way of Attonement, we had but little understood the glory of the second Person in Trinity. No, nor indeed of the Third Person; nor the distinction of the Persons: and therefore, before the Gospel came to be made known to the Sons of men, the distinction of the Persons in Trinity was very little made known: And in those places wherein the Gospel is not revealed, and made known; there is nothing fully known of the distinction of the Persons in the Trinity. Now for the glory of the Trinity, and more especially for the glory of the second Person, the Son of God (who is the special Person in the work of Reconciliation) hath God chosen this way of Reconciliation. It is true indeed, the Third Person, and the Spirit, is sent by Christ
and

and in the Consummation of the work of Reconciliation, the glory of that Person appears; but the main weight of the work lies upon the Son, and for the glory of the Son of God hath he appointed this way to be Reconciled to the world. And indeed it is such a work, as the Son himself doth exceedingly glory in, and accounts this to be a great part of his glory, that he is appointed by God the Father to be the Mediator, to reconcile God and man together. I beseech you observe this; this work of Reconciliation between God and us, it is that which Christ himself doth glory in, and it is that; which he counteth next unto the glory that he hath Personally with the Father, as he is generated of him from all Eternity: next unto that, Jesus Christ glories in this; that he is appointed to be a Mediator between the Father, & sinful man. And that Christ himself doth glory in this work, I will give you a Scripture, or two to prove it. That place which we have in the 13. *John*, 31. is remarkable for this. *Therefore when he was gone out, Jesus said; Now is the Son of man glorified & God is glorified in him.* Glorified now, When? It was when Judas betrayed him. and when he was going to shed his blood, and to die for the sin of man; and to Compleat and Perfect this work of Attainment, or Reconciliation; Now (saith he) *is the Son of man glorified*: as if so be he should have said; I was indeed designed by the Father from all Eternity to undertake this work of Reconciliation, and I came into the world for this very end, that I might do it, and all this while I have been a doing of it in a way of preparation, but the main work is stil behind for me to accomplish, and perfect this work of Reconciliation; but now it is at hand; Now I am going to die, and this my death will bring an end to the work, and now (saith he) *is the Son of man glorified*; yea, here is the glory that I expected from all Eternity; this is the glory that I rejoyced in when I was in the Bosome of the Father; for then I knew of this; I knew I was appointed to be a Mediator

ator; I knew it would cost me my Blood when I should come to compleat that work; and now the time is come when it is to be performed: and therefore now the Son of man is glorified. I say, Jesus Christ accounteth it his glory that he is appointed to stand as a Mediator between God, and us. And therefore you shal find, that when the Scripture speaks of Christs being appointed for this work by God; that he rejoyced in it exceedingly. *Psal. 40: 6. Sacrifices, and Offerings thou didest not desire, mine eares hast thou opened: burnt Offerings, and Sin Offerings thou hast not required; then said I, Lo I come, mine eares (saith he) hast thou opened: what is that which God spak to him, unto which his eare was opened? That which God the Father spake to him, was this: Son; the work of Reconciliation between my selfe, and sinful man, I have appointed, and designed you to it; I have appointed you to go to be a Mediator between us, and to undertake to make Satisfaction; and such satisfaction, as that sinful man, and I may be at peace; as that Mercy, and Justice may be Reconciled together. For let me tel you, (as I have hinted before) God, and we could never have been reconciled, except Mercy and Justice had been reconciled. Now God the Father tells Jesus Christ, that he hath appointed him to this work. And saith Christ; my eare hast thou opened: O, I do entertaine this worke and entertaine this gladly; yea, though I know that I must be made a Sacrifice for the sin of man. And observe what follows in vers, 7. then said I: Lo I come; I am ready; and willing to do this work, for in the volum of the Book it is written, that I should do thy wil: that is; in the Scriptures it was written before ever Christ came into the world, that he should come to perfect this great work. And verse 8. I delight to do thy wil O Lord yea, thy Law is in my heart. What was this wil of God? Certainly this wil of God here spoken of; was that Christ should be a Mediator between God and man; and*

to make up this Reconciliation; and O, saith he, I do even delight to do this wil of thine, though it be a wil which wd cost me deare. And saith he, thy Law; this Law that requires of me to come thus to be a Sacrifice, and to shed my blood to the end that I may be a Mediator between man, and God; even this Law, it is within my heart. This is one Reason why God Chose this way of Reconciling himself to the world; because he intended to the glorifying of his Son, and his Son acknowledgeth it, that it was his glory: and therefore just when he was going to die, he breaketh out into these words; *with desire have I desired to eat this Passover*; because that was to make way for his death, which was the accomplishment of this work of Reconciliation.

Reason, 2.

A second Reason why God would have this way of Reconciling man to himself, is. Because, in this way the Father himself is most glorified; the Attributes of God do shine in a greater luster in this way of Reconciliation, then if so be God had been reconciled unto man only in passing by the offence, and so no more to do; for now shines forth the glory of his Wisdom, of his power, and of his Justice, as well as of his mercy; not only mercy, but the other divine Attributes of God shine in this way of Reconciliation exceedingly bright; and there is no such Glass to behold the glory of God in as the glory of the Gospel in the Mystery of Reconciliation. We indeed behold and see the glory of God in the Glafs of the Creatures; But in the Gospel, in the work of Reconciliation in Christ, there is the bright Glafs where in at the beam of the glory of Gods Attributes are united together, and shine with a Transcendent luster. Yea, there is not only a luster, and a shining forth of them, but a heat, and a warmth that is reflected in the beholding

ding of them. In this way of Reconciliation God himself is glorified; and therefore that Text which I named *John, 13. 31.* You have this likewise said; that as Christ acknowledged himself to be glorified by this work; so saith he, *my Father is glorified in me*; and therefore in Chapter, 17. About the beginning; *Father (saith Christ) the hour is come, glorifie thy Son, that the Son may glorifie thee.* And verſe, 4. *I have glorified thee on Earth; how hath he glorified God? I have finished the work that thou gavest me to do; that work of Mediation; that work of Reconciliation between thy self and sinful man; that work I have finished, and in that work I have glorified thee upon Earth.* And the truth is; this is the glory that God expecteth from the Children of men even to be admired, and magnified in this great work of Reconciling the world to himself in his Son. And that is the second Reason.

Reason, 3rd

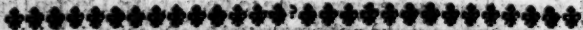
A third Reason is this: Because the Lord saw that there was no such way to melt the heart of sinful Creatures, and to draw them to come, and close with himself, as this way; no such way to incourage the hearts of poor sinners to come in to be reconciled unto God as this; even the Consideration of the great things that the Lord hath done to make peace and Reconciliation between himself and sinners. God (I say) foresaw this; and because he would have a way to break the hardest heart in the world, and to draw the most stout, and stubbarne sinner unto himself; therefore he hath chosen this way above all others of Reconciliation. This the Gospel tells us in that parrable wherein you have the letting out of the Vineyard unto Husbandmen; and it tells you when the Master sent one servant and they beat him; and he sent an other, and they beat him; and at length he said within himself, I wil send my Son, surely

surely they will reverence him; as if he should have said; Here are a company of hard hearted, stubborn, stout, wicked creatures in this world, and they have had this argument, and the other argument to work upon their hearts to perswade them to come unto me, but so hard are their hearts, as that they give a rebound to all the arguments that they have; and there is nothing strikes into their hard hearts, there is nothing melts them, nothing perswades them to come unto me. But I have one argument more, and that shall break the stoutest, and hardest heart that is; and that argument shall be a prevailing argument if they be those that are appointed to life; if they be such as are not lost creatures for ever, and what is that argument? even this; that I am reconciling my self to the world in my son; I will send my Son into the world to work out this reconciliation; and there I will reveale so much of my glory, that when they come to see this, O, their hearts shall be fill'd with admiration; they shall stand and wonder at the goodnes and riches of my grace, and their hearts shall melt before me, and shall at length be gained unto me. when they come to hear thereof. Certainly it is the most dangerous thing in the world for the hearts of men not to be melted not to be gained upon with this Doctrine of our Reconciliation with God in Christ. And remember it; if your hearts when you come to hear of this Doctrine be not gained upon, be not drawn unto God; it is a shrew'd argument that you are lost creatures; for God himselfe looks upon this way of reconciliation as the most gaining and prevailing argument that possibly he can use to gain the heart of any man. And except you finde your hearts gained upon by this, you may take it as an argument of a most dangerous Condition in which you are. I dare appeal to those whose hearts God hath gained to himselfe, let them say what was it that gained their hearts, what was it that broke their hearts most kindly at first and caused them to fly unto God; was it not the opening

R

pening of this mystery of Reconciliation in Christ, was it not Gods tender of his mercy to the soules of poore sinful creatures in Christ, And woe to those Persons that shal sit under the ministry of the Gospel the droppings of heaven and here the blessed tidings of Reconciliation in Christ, and yet not find their hearts gained by this argument; for this was one special end why God chose this way of Reconciling himself to the world, that he might by this gaine the hearts of the Children of men to himselfe for ever.

So that now you have had al these things opened in the point besides the proof of it in Scripture. first you have had shewed unto you, that there could be no Reconciliation but in Christ. secondly; That Christ was a fit mediator to reconcile God and us together; and in what particular. thirdly what Christ hath undertook to do for the Reconciliation of us to God, and what he doth to this very day. Fourthly how we com to have Interest in what he hath done for our Reconciliation. fifthly the severall properties, or consequences of this Reconciliation which doth discover to us what a kinde of Reconciliation it is. And then the Reasons why God would reconcile the world to himself in this way rather then in any other way.



CHAP. 20.

APPLICATION

Use. 1. See the woful misery sin hath brought us unto; humiliation for sinnesful.

THIS improvment of al by application to our selves follows; Indeed a great part of what hath been insisted on though it hath been by way of Explication, yet it hath

hath been Applicatory. But there are yet further things by way of Application to be presented to you, al flowing naturally from what hath been taught neither shal I need to be long in it because it is but only a working upon your hearts the same things which I have enlarged upon in the opening of the Point.

USE. I

1. then from this point ; that God was in Christ Reconciling the world to himselfe. Hence is presented before us the woful misery that sin hath brought us into. There is nothing that sets out the Breach between God and man so much as this. That the making up of that Breach must be in Christ. There is a great question now on foot. Whether humiliation be necessary or no ; whether men must be made sensible of their natural condition, and so be humbled, and that way be brought unto Jesus Christ. There are a great many that Catch hold upon the abuse of this Humiliation so as wholly to exclude it (but exceeding ignorantly) because that some would make humiliation as if it were a Condition of the Covenant, which indeed it is not ; and when they heare us say, that it is not a Condition ; they presently Conclude that there is no need at al of it ; because say they, Humiliation doth not at al interest us in Jesus Christ. And because some perhaps wil trust too much in their Humiliation, and rely upon it, therefore others wil wholly take it away, and exclude it. But : though humiliation is not the Condition of the Covenant, though it is not that which doth give us an interest in Jesus Christ ; though it is not that which we are to rely upon ; yet there is very much need of humiliation, and that we be made sensible of our lost Condition by sin ; and by that which hath been delivered you may see a necessity of it : for Consider ; I suppose if you beleive that God wil pardon your sins, and that he wil be Reconciled

unto you, you beleeve it is in Christ: Yea, you will say, that is Certaine; and therefore seeing Christ hath wrought our Reconciliation what need we be humbled for sin. Certainly my Bretheren in that which you say, if you understand what you say, there is implied the deepest work of humiliation, and the strongest argument thereunto that it is possible for any Creature to be Capable of in this world. How is that, you will say? Thus. I beleeve that God is reconciled to me in Christ; what? hath God wrought my reconciliation in his Son? hath he brought it about by Jesus Christ? and chosen that way above all other wayes to do it? Then certainly such was the Breach between God and me through my sin that al the Angels in Heaven, and al the men in the world could never make it up. Such was the Breach that my sin had made between God and my soul as it is required so great a mystery of Godliness to make it up, as the very Angels themselves are not able to comprehend. And indeed it is the greatest work that ever God did do, or that ever God wil do to al Eternity. Consider what it cost to make up the Breach that sin had made between God and thy soul.

And againe; If you beleeve that you are reconciled to God in Christ; you do not only see and are Convinced of the greatness of that Breach, but you must be sensible of it too; for can I go out of my self, and exercise such a gloriouse act of Faith upon Christ as Mediator, and yet not be sensible of what Christ hath done? Certainly the work of faith can never be raised in the heart, But it is raised so as the sinner knows what he doth when he doth beleeve, and is sensible of what he doth. And if this be so; take but these two things. That when a man beleeves in Christ as Mediator, that he knows what he doth; when he beleeves, and is sensible of what he doth; take but these two things for granted, and I will warrant that soul wil be humbled, in fellows of it self, and of its own nature; it need not be required as a Condition;

dition, it is as necessary to the work of faith as light in the Sun when it shines, or as heat of the fire, and indeed it is implied. As for example. When I am to go to such a place, or about such a business; it is true, going is not the condition required; it is not required that I should travel so many steps by way of Condition, but that such an act should be performed; that I should be at such a place at such a day to do such a business; now though this be not expressed in a condition, that I must go so many miles, and the going of the miles is as necessary as the other; and though that be not required yet it is implied in the act that is required; and it is to be looked upon as necessary, as that which is required as a Condition. So, it is true, humiliation is not the Condition of the second Covenant, it is not the thing that interesteth us in Jesus Christ, but it is that which the nature of faith doth necessarily imply; for faith is an understanding Grace; and indeed it is the most glorious work of the soul that ever was: for a soul to believe in God through Christ; to believe that God is Reconciled to him in Christ it is the most glorious work under heaven.

Now when I believe in Christ as a Savior; what is he a Savior from? a Savior from my sin, a Savior from the wrath of God, and this the Soul must necessarily be sensible of, how else can it put forth such an act of Faith; and I know no faithful preacher in the world that ever pressed humiliation further than this; that when men believe in Christ, they must know, and be sensible of what they do; you must know Christ is a Mediator, and if he be a Mediator, what is he a Mediator for? why, to make up a Breach between God, and you. And then you must know what that breach is; that is, the breach that your sin hath made. And then you must know what sin that is; Namely, that your sin hath provoked the Justice of God, and put you under the Curse of the Law. So that you see the necessity of opening the law, though it be not a thing which interesteth

eth us in Christ, yet it follows of it self as a necessary Consequence without which you cannot understand Christ as a reconciler. This is therefore the first use If God wil never be reconciled to any Soul but only in Christ; then that Soul that comes to be Saved must come to see it self in a most woful Condition; for such a Creature as hath need of such a Mediator must needs be in a most Wretched, Damnable, Miserable, Cursed condition in it self, for else it could never requier such a Mediator. And certainly there is no such way to honor Christ as this. When men speake of Christ, and of free Grace, except they instruct people in this; Namely the breach that is made between God, and them through sin; how can any of their Avditory understand what Christ is. Christ is a Mediator; what to do? to save from sin, What? from what sin? from sin. What is that? sin must be made known if Christ be the reconciler between God, and us; because Reconciliation implies a breach, and a breach that is made by sin, and if you know not what breach it is that is made, how can you honor Christ as Mediator? So that you must know what that breach is: that breach is the enmity that is in your hearts by Nature; you must know what that enmity is, and be sensible of it, or else you can never give glory to God in Christ. And though many have so much in their mouthes of Christ, and of free Grace; yet it is apparent in their Course that they donot give glory to Christ; Christ hath little cause to thank them for any glory that he hath from them in their Conversation; they rather blott, and staine the name of Christ: and what is the reason? The truth is, they never rightly understood Christ as a Mediator; they never knew what it was to have need of a Mediator between God, and them, and so they having but a superficial knowledg of Christ; Christ hath but a superficial glory from them. That is the first Use.

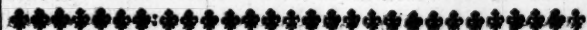
CHAP. 31.

Use, 2. *Discovering of Mistakes about Reconciliation.*

IF God hath reconciled himself to the world in Christ. Hence we are to take notice of the great mistakes there are in the world in the point of Reconciliation with God. Certainly if this be a truth; that the only way of making up our peace with God is in Christ; then the world doth generally mistake in the great matter of Reconciliation with God; and a mistake, in this, is an undoing mistake, a damning mistake; a Soul may perish eternally meerly thorough a mistake in the matter of Reconciliation. A man may be troubled for sin, and cry out of his sin, and may break off the practice of his sin, and cry unto God in Prayer that he would pardon him, and be reconciled unto him, and yet mistaking here, and not understanding that it must be God, in, and through Christ that reconcileth himself: the mistake in this may prove an undoing mistake to that Soul; and although they should be Crying out of their sins all their daies, they may perish at last if they do not know, and rightly understand how to close with Gods mercy as it is in Christ: if they do not understand, that it is God in Christ that reconcileth himself to the world. We know the greatest part of people look for their Reconciliation with God meerly in a natural way; they have sinned against him, and they wil cry unto him for mercy, and for pardon, and so they thinkal may be made up between God and them. I remember *Luther* hath a notable speech concerning this in his meditation about the way which God hath appointed for reconciling of man to himself, that it is in Christ. *It is intollerable and*

and horrible blasphemy (saith he) to feigne any worke by which thou mayest presume to please God; and he gives the reason of it. It is therefore intollerable, and horrible blasphemy for any to feigne any worke by which they shal presume to pacifie God, when they shal see, and hear that God cannot be pacified any other way, but by such a way, as the blood of his Son one drop where of is more precious then the whole Creation. And upon this ground being meditating of Gods reconciling the world to himself, and that it was by such a way as the blood of his Son, and that one drop of his blood is of more value then al the Creatures in Heaven, and Earth; hence it was that he affirms it to be horrible, and intollerable blasphemy for any man to think to pacifie God any other way. Nay, when God by such a way hath appointed Reconciliation, for a man to neglect this, and to think, that any work of his own shal pacify God; especially those that heare the Gospel preached to them, when they shal think of any other way of their own, and so neglect the way that God hath appointed this is indeed a most intollerable, and horrible blasphemy: and Certainly it is that which provoketh the Lord exceedingly; that when a sinner shal be made apprehensive and sensible of the Breach that is made between God and him; for that sinner to think the Breach to be no greater then may be made up with any work of Repentance, or good meaning or good works; the Lord disdaineth to look upon that sinner in this his folly; that a man should think that the Breach between God, and him is a matter of no greater moment. No, my Brethren, you must know, that the Breach between God, and you by sin, is a matter of another manner of Consequence then can be made up by prayers, or feares, or any thing else that you can do al this is untrempered Morter. It is true, when there is Repennance, and turning unto God, it is a good signe that God is at work with your hearts; but that cannot do

do the deed; it is in Christ; it is the blood of the Son of God that must make Satisfaction for sin; it is that which must make the Reconciliation. This is that which is indeed the great doctrine of the Gospel; and if you receive this into your understandings, into your hearts al other things that we preach are to no purpose at al, it wil never do you good, till you have embraced this, you wil never Sanctify Gods name, nor gloryfy God in your Conversations, nor have any true peace within your doores, til you come to receive this point into your hearts; that God is in Christ Reconciling the world to himselfe. Take heed therefore of any mistakes in this point. That is the second Use.



C H A P. 22.

Use. 3. To encourage sinners to come to God for Reconciliation: And discouragements removed.

The Third is a Use of incouragement to sinners to come for Reconciliation with God. You may remember that one Reason why God did on purpose appoint this way to Reconcile himself to the world, was, that he might break the hearts of sinners, and that it might be an encouragement to sinners to come in, Is this Gods End? O! that then God might have this end in your souls. This hath bin our endeavor to open what we could, this Doctrine of the Gospel, namely, of Gods Reconciling of himself in Christ; and we have not done this only from this Text but from others: and though divers other things have been spoken, yet you cannot but know, that the drift of al hath bin to this purpose, that God may have this glory of gaining our hearts to himselfe, and that it might be an incouragement unto you to come in to be reconciled unto God. Are

there any that are apprehensive of the Breach that sin hath made between God and their souls? I suppose there are many. You put up papers of complaints of the hardness of your hearts and that you cannot be sensible of sins you desire; it is a sign that there is some sensibleness therefore of the breach between God and you. Now the Lord in opening of this Doctrine propounds the way of Reconciliation, and he would fain draw your hearts to come in and to be reconciled unto him; what is it that hinders? These two things are the Only hinderance.

First, The great distance that is between God, and a Creature; I am a poor vile worm, and the Lord is an infinite, glorious, dreadful God. O! but that I might take off this dreadfulnes from you, that that might not scare, and hinder you, therefore he propounds himself to you in his Son. If God should indeed speak from Heaven by thundring, and lightening, and call in sinners to come in and humble your selves, and seek to make your peace with him, that might scare you, and upon the sight of the distance between God and you, you might not dare to come in. But saith God; I call you now in my Son; my Son that came to be like one of you, and to be made sensible of your infirmities; it is in him that I offer you Reconciliation. This takes away the dreadfulnes of God from sinners, and therefore a mighty encouragement. And though there be such a distance between God and us, yet there is a Christ between God the Father, and us. Though we be the poorest worms in the world, though we are mean and vile Creatures, yet if we were ten thousand times meaner then we are, seeing there is such a Mediator between God, and us, this makes up the distance. Christ is such a Mediator as there is enough in him to make up all the distance that can be between God, and man.

Another hinderance, or discouragement is sin: either the greatness of our sin, or the multitude of our sins, or the long continuance in our sins is that which hinders

us from coming. O! saith the soul, I have been so vile a sinner, and I have continued so long, and I have multiplied sin one after another, and is it possible for such a one as I am to be Reconciled? It is true had'st thou to deal only with God as he is in himself, thou mightest despair: But know O! sinner that it is God Reconciling of himself in Christ; therefore though thou beest a great sinner, & a sinner of a long continuance; yet there being a Reconciliation with God in his Son; seeing that Christ hath undertaken such a work as to make up a peace between God and sinners, and to mediate for them; thou may'st be encouraged to come in, and to lay hold upon this grace of God in Christ.

If thou sayest thou art unworthy; and that there is no worthines in thee for God to regard thee for. Al this is still answered with this. It is God that is reconciling the world to himselfe in Christ. Indeed were it so that there were nothing but God and thee to deal together; and if thou wert to deal only with God, himselfe thou mightest be a fraid but thou hast to deal with God not in himself win his Son, for so he hath set forth himselfe to the world, he is reconciled to the world in his son, and herefore that may incorage thee notwithstanding al thy unworthines.

And what Further hast thou to discourage thee?

O! thou wilt say; God is infinitely Just to punish sin.

Still this point wil be Sufficient to remove al discouragements; that he is Reconciling the world to himselfe. Though he is Holy; his Holines is pleased in Christ; Though he is Just: his Justice is satisfied in Christ. So that there is enough in this point to take away al objections, to remove al discouragements that any Sinner in the world hath. And therefore as God doth propound this on purpose to draw sinners to himselfe that they may be reconciled unto him; So let them know; that the more grace here is received for the taking away of al objections, and discouragements; the more wil sinners be left without excuse another day if they do not come

and lay hold upon this grace of God in Christ; God
 will have his glory that way if he cannot have it the other.
 God primarily intends his glory in reconciling the world
 to himself; and therefore takes away all discouragements
 from sinners that they may come in and venture their souls
 upon his rich grace, and mercy in Christ; But if God
 cannot have his glory from that point; then, the
 more this is preached in any congregation, the more will
 God have his glory by the stopping of mens mouths that
 they shal not be able to say another day; O, the Lord
 was terrible, and he was a hard master, and I durst not
 goe unto him. Indeede my Conscience told me I had
 sinned against him, but I durst not goe to him for mercy
 for I was afraid of him. The mouths of men shal be
 stopped another day that have heard this doctrine of
 God reconciling the world in Christ opened unto them,
 and have not come in, and layd hold upon it. Indeed
 it is the plea of many a servant that hath offended
 his master, when one comes to him and saith; why do
 not you goe and humble your self before your master.
 O, saith he I dare not, he is such a furious man that
 he wil fly upon me presently, I had rather suffer very
 much then go to him; and this they think excuse enough;
 and many poor Servants wil rather wander up and down
 the Contry, and perish, then go backe to their master.
 But noe sinner can say so of God; let him be never so
 vild a sinner that is departing from God, if one should
 come unto him and say; you wretched sinner whether
 are you going? you are departing from God, you are
 going away from him; but behold God calls you to
 come in; O, goe, and humble you, foules and lament
 your sin, and lay downe all those weapons of enmity a-
 gainst God which you have taken up. This sinner now
 cannot say; how shal I dare to look upon God, I that
 have been such a vild, and wretched sinner; Surely God
 will destroy me, and consume me. No, the Lord pro-
 pounds himselfe to you, a God of mercy in his Son, and
 tels

telk you, that he hath provided a meanes in his Son to be reconciled unto you; and that his heart hath been so much upon reconciling himselfe to the children of men, as that he hath sent his son to do this worke and though it cost the very blood of his son, yet he wil do it; and therefore sinner if thou dost not come in, but wilt go on in wandring from God and Continuing in wayes of enmity against him, thy blood be upon thine own head. Thou hast read this blessed doctrine of the Gospel opened; that God was reconciling himselfe to the world; and that he was reconciling himselfe to the world in his Son; and that God excepted that when this message was brought to a Congregation; the whole Congregation should come and fly unto him; and that the world should be fill'd with Cries; O! that we might be Reconciled unto him. Our Lord expects this day from some of you to heare you reflect this upon your selves by crying unto him for Reconciliation in his Son; that should be the issue of such sermons as these are; God ever after such preaching looks to heare some soul repeat in prayer to God, and tel him what it hath heard in the Ministry of the word; and upon that make a prayer unto him according to what it hath heard. As in this manner; The Lord expects that this day some sinner, or other should get alone, and be crying unto God in prayer. Lord, I have heard, not only that there is a possibility for sinners to be Reconciled, but there is such a glorious way of Reconciliation, that thou hast done it in thy Son. Such an honorable way; and such a certaine way of Reconciliation; and that thy heart is much in that way. And Lord I have heard, that this is a way, that takes away all objections in the world; al the discouragements that can be imagined; and thou hast revealed it to that end, that is, that thou mightest break the hearts of sinners, and draw them to come in, and accept of that blessed covenant that thou hast rendred to them in Christ, and to be reconciled unto thee. Now Lord I desire to cast my soul upon
thi.

this free grace of thine in thy Son; O! that I might feel thy spirit inabling me to such a glorious work as this; and O! that the Lord might heare such things as these from some of your Closets this day; it wil be that which wil even cause the heart of God to rejoyce that ever he opened the doctrine of Reconciliation to you; otherwise it wil turne to the quite contrary end; it wil only serve to stop your mouthes at the great day. That is another Use.



CHAP. 23.

Use. 4. Dispaire not of Gods making peace in this Nation.

YET once more: If there be such a way of Reconciliation between God and us; if God hath wrought it so, that it is in Christ. Truly from hence we have no Cause to dispaire in Gods power, and wisdom, and goodness to make peace in this Nation; God hath done the greater work. You see that God is a God of peace and loves peace; and to the end that he might be at peace with the wretched Children of men, he hath wrought so wonderfully as to send his own Son into the world and provide such a way that he may be sure that peace may be made, and by that way he hath done it: He hath made peace between Mercy; and Justice; there is peace made between an infinite provoked God and wretched sinful wild Creatures. I told you before that this was a mighty difficult work; yea, the most difficult that ever was, or can be in the world. If God hath therefore wrought such a work so difficult, in a way so glorious. Then from hence learne not to dispaire, but that God may worke even peace for us in this Nation, and an honorable peace, and a good peace too. We are not only

only hereby incouraged to cry unto God, for peace between him and our Souls; but we are by this incouraged to cry unto him for peace in the Nation, and that he would put an end to these woful times of destruction, and misery, and war which many of our Brethren have suffered, and bled under. And indeed those that do understand, or have ever felt the work of God in working peace between his maiesty and their Souls, they are those that have such interest in God, as if any people, shal prevail with him for peace in the land; it must be these; they will prove to be our peace makers in the conclusion, howsoever people at present cry out of them as if they were the means and instruments of making the gratest debate, and as if they were the enemies of peace: No my Brethren, they that have experience of this great work of God, of making peace between himself, and their Souls, they are they that lie at the Throne of grace continually crying unto him that is the prince of peace to make peace in the Land.

We desire peace. But you will say; How can it be done that way? Why should we say how? when God himself hath made peace between Heaven, and Earth. We see things so intricate, that we know not how it should be done, and we wonder it should ever be brought about, that the Spirits of men being so set one against another there should be a Reconciliation: But God hath waies in his infinite Wisdom that we are not able to comprehend, the spirits of any of our Adversaries are not so desperately bent against us, but there was as much enmity between us, and God, as there can be betwixt us, and any of our adversaries in the world: and we have no such exasperated enimes against us, as we were by nature against God. If therefore God could find a way when we were such enemies unto him to make peace betwixt us; and him; then hath God likewise a way to make a true, settled, and constant peace between our Adversaries, and us: And we should desire; that as
God

God hath made our peace with him firme, and sure; so that what peace God makes in this land, it may be somewhat like unto that peace that he hath made between Heaven, and Earth. There is a firme peace made between God, and us, a peace that we may rest upon, and confide in. A peace between our adversaries, and us, (as things now stand) we cannot count it sure; you cannot be sure of your lives one night after it is done: as things now stand. But we must desire such a peace might be made, as there is made between God, and us; sure, and firme, and stable. Therefore pray much, and beleeve much as you are able; and though things be brought to such a strait as there is no likelyhood in the thoughts of men how it should be done; yet they are not brought to such a strait as things were between God, and us before he reconciled himself unto us. And there was more required to make up that Reconciliation betwixt God, and us, then there can be between us, and our adversaries. And what was it that made our peace first with God? God was in Christ reconciling the world; it was the blood of his Son that saved our blood, and therefore let all those that are godly go to this God of peace, and not only cry to him by Prayer for the making of a true, and firme peace amongst us; but present unto him the blood of his Son to that end; and say; O Lord; thou that sentest thy Son into the world to make peace between our Souls and thee; look upon that blood, and let that blood prevail with thee to make peace in England; that there may be no more of the precious blood of thy Saints spilt, and shed amongst us. Here is the way to get peace. And Certainly if the blood of Christ were able to make such a peace between us, and God as is firme, and lasting: it will be able also to make peace in this poor Nation; and such a peace as shal be firme, and lasting too.

Thus we are encouraged in regard of external condition; in regard of the peace of our land; that seeing
 God

God hath done the greater, he is able much more to do the lesser. That seeing God hath reconciled mercy, and Justice together, and made peace betwixt Heaven, and Earth, when the Breach was so great, as all the men in the world, and the Angels in Heaven could not find out a way to compose the difference, and make up that breach, yet he hath done it: He can certainly also compose the differences, and make up the breach that is amongst us.



CHAP. 24.

Use, 5. Those that have assurance of their peace with God; highly to prize it.

Hence then if our Reconciliation with God be such as hath been opened, and if it be wrought after that way; Then an other Use we may make of it is this. Namely: That all those that have any comfortable assurance that their peace is made with God, they are to prize it highly, and not easily, and lightly to loose the assurance of it; Why? Because it hath cost so much as it hath done, and it hath been wrought for them after such a strange manner as it hath been; the greatest work that ever God made; and wherein his wilddone, and goodness, and power hath been seen; now that which God hath set himselfe to worke so powerfully in, to the end that he might accomplish it; and that which hath cost so dear as it hath done; that wherein so much of the mystery of Godliness is contained; surely then if we have obtained the assurance of it in our selves, we should highly prize it, and we should seek to preserve it, and not loose it; we know not how. I remember when we opened the excellency of

our Reconciliation with God and, what admirable fruits did flow from it; we had there a Life like unto this; that because it is so excellent we should preserve it and not let it go lightly. But now this Life is drawn from the way of Reconciliation, that it is a Reconciliation in Christ; and in indeed the argument falls more strongly upon us here then it did formerly. before, the argument was, that we should prize it because we have such comfort in our Reconciliation; because such admirable fruits doe flow from it; because it is able to carry us through all troubles in the world. But now we must seek to preserve it, because we have it in Christ, because it is that which cost more then ten thousand worldes are worth; because God hath wrought so wonderfully to bring it about. Hath God therefore spoken peace to any of your souls? take heed that you turn not again to folly; *Psalm: 85. 8. I wil bear what the Lord wil say, for he wil speak peace to his people and to his Saints; but let not them return again to folly.* Hast thou gotten any comfortable persuasion that the Lord is reconciled unto thee in Christ; and God hath made thee to know that Reconciliation with him was a difficult work? it may be it cost you many tears, and prayers, and much trouble before you could get it; and a long time you were seeking of it in a Legal way, and crying unto God for his mercy to pardon your sins; and Seeking to him in that natural way; but then you could not have peace spoken to your hearts, but in time the Lord opened the mystery of Christ unto your souls; and then you sought Reconciliation with him in Christ; and you saw how that it was in his blood that your peace was made. Have you got peace in an Evangelical way through Christ? O! Make much of it; it is a precious Jewel in that it comes to you in such a way as this is; it cost God dear, and it may cost you dear; but whether it cost you dear or no; you may be sure it cost God dear; therefore make much of it, do not loose it: to loose it fully so as God should again

again become your enemy, that indeed you cannot do ; but you may loose it by your apprehensions ; you may loose the comfortable assurance of it.

There are Two waies that Christians may loose the comfortable assurance of their peace with God. First through the weaknes of their faith, secondly through the sinfulness of their lives.

CHAP. 25.

Christians may loose the assurance of their Peace with God through the weaknes of their Faith.

1. Weaknes, *When they think the sin they fall into, doth presently cause an enmity between God and them.* Object. *What need Believers then be careful to avoid sin?* Answered. 2. Weaknes, *Judging Gods works as enmity against them.*

First, Through the weaknes of their Faith ; and that in Two waies.

Weaknes. 1.

When they shal through their weaknes think that that sin they fall into, or are overtaken with, doth presently cause an enmity between God, and them. I make no question but there are many souls that God is reconciled unto, and sometimes have had some comfort in the assurance of this reconciliation, and yet if at any time they be but overcome with the sinful distempers of their hearts, they presently think, that this puts an enmity between God, and them again, and they begin to look upon God as upon their enemy, and think that all the peace is broken between God, and them, and this makes such a Breach between God, and them, as that all that God hath done, is undone again, and now they think that God is against them in all his waies, and contrary

unto them as unto an enemy. It's true, Carnall hearts that do not understand what the difficulty is of making peace with God; or what a breach it is that sin makes between God, and the soul; they can sin, and sin, and sin, and yet think God will be merciful to them still, and never look upon their sin as enmity unto God, or upon God as an enemy unto them in regard of their sin. But take a poor soul that understands what sin is, and hath found it a hard thing to make peace between God, and himself, as soon as any sin overcomes such a soul, the dayly weaknesse many times make him think that God is an enemy to him; and however he had good hopes before, yet the breach is again as wide, if not wider between God, and him as ever it was. Now by this know, you do dishonor much the great work of God in Christ in the point of Reconciliation. surely it is as great a dishonor as you can cast upon Christ; when he hath come to make Reconciliation between God, and you, and when he hath undertaken it, and done it so throughly as he hath; and when it cost him his very life to do it, yet when you apprehend this Reconciliation to be no otherwise, but that upon any offence, you think al is undone again: truly this were but a very poor Reconciliation. Suppose two that were at odds one with another, and a great breach hath been made between them; another comes and reconciles these two for the present, but yet so as that the one shall watch the other, to take an advantage against the other, so as if there be but the least offence committed, they shal be as great enemies one to another as before; this were but a poor Reconciliation. So when you come to think, that upon every sin you commit, after you have had your peace made between God and you, though you can appeal unto God in the sincerity of your heart, that it is the greatest burden in the world to you, that you do thus sin against him, and you would think it the greatest mercy in the world to be delivered from that body of sin: yet, when your shal
come

come to think, that upon this sin you have committed, the breach is made as wide as ever it was with God; What a dishonor do you put upon Christ? What a Reconciliation hath Christ made for you? O! therefore beleeve that Christ hath made another manner of peace with God then so; and know, that it is not a peace that can so soon be broken. If a Bone-setter should set a Bone in your Body that were broken, or out of joynt, and set it so that it is right for the present; but yet so too, that if you stir your arm, or leg, it is out of joynt again; you wil conclude, this is no skilful Bonefetter. Christ came from Heaven for this very end, and purpose, that he might joyn God, and us together, that he might make us one with God. Do you think that Christ hath only set us so together, as that upon every dayly infirmity, we should be out with God again? No, certainly he hath set us strongly together, more strongly then ever we were, Adam in Innocency, when he was without sin, had not such a strong peace with God, as thou hast in the midst of thy sins. It is a truth; and though we cannot speak of such things without trembling, in regard we know how ready carnal hearts are to abuse them; yet this is a truth, and so I would have Christians to look upon it; to look upon the reconciliation that is made between God, and them, as a peace firmer then ever it was with *Adam*, and God, though *Adam* had no sin, and they have many sins, for *Adam* had it not in Christ; and therefore think upon it as such a Reconciliation as Christ hath wrought, and so honor God in it, and sanctifie God in it. If indeed it were no other reconciliation then thou hast got by thy own prayers, or then thou hast got by thy own tears; then thou mightest feare, that, that reconciliation might be broken upon thy renewing of sin. And the truth is; this is the ground why those that have inlightned Consciences, are so full of feares, and doubts; those indeed that have no inlightnings in them, are without any feare
but

but the other are full of doubts, and feares; and it is upon this ground; because that peace they have, is no other but that which they have gotten by their Prayers, and by their duties, and by their teares, and by their good meanings, as they think, and never bring in Christ; they never have been acquainted with that great Mystery of Godliness. Now, that peace with God that thou hast got any way but by Gods revealing the work of his reconciling himselfe to the world in Christ; that peace wil never hold long; but thou wilt be ready upon every temptation, upon every suggestion; upon every new sin committed, to cal that peace into question: But if thou hast been rooted in Christ, and thy peace grounded upon that which is beyond al thy duties, and al thy teares, and prayers, nnd canst look upon God as reconciled unto thee in Christ; this peace wil hold, and this may hold notwithstanding abundance of sins may remaine in the soul of one that is thus reconciled unto God. And therefore for your help, because you may not upon every sin cal in question your reconciliation with God: know this; that being reconciled unto God, thou art not under the Law so as that every sin against the Law should put thee under the sentence, of eternal death: *thou art not under the curse that doth threaten everlasting death to those that so sin.* Here is the difference between one that is reconciled unto God, and an other that is not. One that is not reconciled unto God in Christ, is so under the Law, as every sin he commits, be it little, or great doth put him under the sentence, and curse of eternal death: the neglect of any duty, be it never so smal doth it. But now, here is the priviledg of a Believer; when thou art once a Believer, and so art in Jesus Christ; then the sins thou committest; those should indeed be for thy humiliation; but there is none of them that do put thee under the sentence of eternal death; neither upon this ground art thou to keep the Law: that is, to keep it so, as to think that

that if thou do it not, or that every breach of the Law should put thee under the sentence of eternal death. Indeed others that are under the Law, they must look to keep the Law, whether they be able or not; but the Law hath no power over thee that way, and thou art not upon that ground to keep it; and therefore thy sins which thou committest, do not put thee under the sentence of eternal death, as the sins of others do: there is no condemnation to them that are in Jesus Christ; & it is true of every moment, and instant of time, that there is no condemnation to them that are in Jesus Christ. I will give you another scripture for this, that is as clear as the other, though not perhaps so much taken notice of. It is in Rom. 7. 5. *For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sin which were by the Law did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.* Note the Motions of sin which were by the Law did work in our members; What did they do? they brought forth fruit; and fruit unto death; this the blessed Apostle saith was when we were in the flesh. But now being Beleevers; though we have the remainings, the motions of sin, yee they are not such as bring forth fruit unto death. None of the sins of Beleevers bring forth fruit unto death, for they are delivered from that power of the Law; that the Law cannot come with the sentence of death upon them. This is an high priviledg of Beleevers; and the right knowledge of this would help us that we should not think, that our peace with God is so broken that God is our enemy through every sin which through humane frailty is committed.

Object. You will say, what need then Beleevers to be careful to avoid sin; may they not take liberty to walke as they list?

O! No; there are other arguments besides this. Indeed had they a slaveish spirit, had they no other arguments to perswade them from sin, but this, that sin would make God, and them enemies; it were somewhat

Men

Mention that object, and say; that Believers may do what they list because their peace with God cannot be broken: The truth is they themselves have flaccid hearts; and they do not know the strength of other arguments to keep them from sin. I dare boldly affirme this: that a Believer should not upon the Commission of sin think, that therefore he is now under the sentence of death, if so be it be such a sin as may stand with the state of Grace, as many weakneses, and frailties may; for there are some sins; *at living after the flesh*, which the scripture speaks of, which if Believers live in they shall die. You will say; what, can they perish eternally? yet this is made a means to keep them from living after the flesh: But if they should come to live after the flesh which Gods grace will keep them from doing in a constant way; they shall die; and so far they may apprehend eternal death were due unto them, if it were possible for them to fall into that condition, to live after the flesh. But it is not true, that a Believer upon every sin he commits should be under the sentence of death; for being once Believers we are freed from the Law. And therefore the Apostle after he had spoken of the Law of God to the same purpose in *Rom. 7*. He answers this Objection. *What shall we say then? shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid: How shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein:* and then follows. *Even as sin hath reigned unto death, so grace must reign through righteousness unto eternal life.* The Grace of God reigns, domineers over all things that come to oppose it; even over all our infirmities, over all our sins; over whatsoever may seem to contradict it; the grace of God reigns; there is a domineering power in the grace of God over all things that would contradict it; but this is through Righteousness. Thou hast sin in thee that would oppose Gods reconciling Grace; but it reigns notwithstanding that sin of thine, and it reigns to eternal life; it hath a reigning power to carry thee through

through all difficulties, and hinderances to eternal life, and all through the righteousness of Christ. Therefore Believers that they may keep their peace with God, are to look upon all duties required in the Law as bound to do them; and that they are not freed from the duties the Law requires; their relation unto God redeeming of them, doth not take away their relation unto God as a Creator; still they are bound to God as a Creator; as well as a Redemer. But they should look upon the Law as coming to them in the hand of Christ. It is an excellent speech which *Luther* hath for this O! how sweet (saith he) are the commandments of God unto us, when we receive them, not as they are in the Book; but as they are in the wounds of Christ? When we read the Commandments of God in the wounds of Christ, And receive them there; O! how sweet are they then! then we obey them out of sweet principles, not out of Legal respects, as if upon every Breach we should be brought under the sentence of eternal death, as we did before. This I take to be the meaning of that place in *Rom. 8. 15.* For you have not received the spirit of Bondage against to feare. What is the spirit of Bondage? The spirit of Bondage that causeth feare at first; before one is a Believer, is this; either perfectly obey the Law, or Perish, saith the spirit, even the spirit of God, whether able, or no; you must obey every thing or die; and if thou hast sinned against the Law, thou art now accursed notwithstanding all the duties that thou hast done; the spirit of God saith so to all unbelievers and this causeth feare; but saith the Apostle; you have not received the spirit of Bondage to feare again; though perhaps thou mayest feare upon thy weakness, that God will turne thine enemy upon every Breach: but the spirit of God saith not so, that thou art therefore accursed but that spirit enableth thee to go to God as a Father to heale thy weakness, and to give thee power against them, and the Contrary is such a mistake as indeed is a great dishonour

honor to the work of God, reconciliation of God in Christ. We must put much upon that great work which God puts so much upon, and if we did, we might go up, and down in the world, with a world of comfort, and it would increase sanctification. Indeed to deny all kind of obligation of the Law to God, and to say that men are not bound to keep it, as God being their Creator &c there is an extreme vanity in it, but to give the Law that which is its due, and to give the Believer his due too; to shew how far we are bound to it, and how far delivered from it, this is a great mystery of the Gospel and people should labor to understand it aright, and take heed, least out of a desire to apprehend the grace of God in Christ, we do not go too far in overthrowing our obligations to God by the Law. One would think, that this which I have delivered (if mens spirits were not very wanton) were enough, namely, that we are not under the sentence of condemnation, though we are not freed from the Law, and the duties thereof as God is our Creator, and we should think the grace of God magnified in this, and therefore thus far take hold, and make use of this Grace of God in Christ, as not to lose the comfort of it. This is the first weakness that hinders men from preserving the comfortable assurance of their peace with God.

Weakness 2.

The second Weakness is this. When men that are godly are ready to judge of Gods works through their weakness, as works of enmity against them; not only of their waies towards God as an argument that God, and they are at enmity; but they are ready to judge all the administrations of Gods providence, as if they were the works of an enemy to them; as if God were in them, walking contrary to them: This is a great weakness, and dishonor unto God. Let the wicked, and ungodly judge so
if

if they Wil. As God saith; fury is not in me; who would set the briars, and the Thorns before him? he wil go through them. When God comes in outward waies of misery; ungodly ones may look upon them as God walking in them contrary unto them; they may look upon al his works as the works of an enemy, and as one that intends their ruine, and destruction: they are to look upon every trouble, if it be but the least distemper of their body as the beginnings of eternal wrath, and a making way for eternal misery for ought they know. But they that are reconciled to God, it is their weakness if they should look upon the greatest affliction they meet withal as a work of Gods coming towards them as an enemy. No; you must know; that there is this power in your reconciliation with God in Christ; as

First, That there is nothing that ever God doth towards you, that doth tend to everlasting wrath, nothing, whatever it be. Here is thy comfort; that thou mayest build upon this; though thy affliction be sore, and though they be long upon thy body, or estate; perhaps thou loosest al that thou hast, and it may be God delivers thee up into the hand of thine enemies; and they trample upon thee as dirt; yet nothing of al this tends to eternal wrath. As on the contrary; though a wicked man may have a great many favors from God, and fruits of his patience; yet no wicked man hath ground to make such an interpretation of any good thing he enjoys from God, as to think that this doth tend to his eternal good. So those that are beleevers, though they meet with never so great afflictions; yet they have not sufficient ground to make this interpretation of those afflictions; that they tend to their utter undoing. And one would think that this were enough on the other side; for men to beleeve; that whatsoever afflictions they meet withal in this world; the wrath of God in al those afflictions is taken away; they shal not tend to their ruine, and e-

V 2

eternal

eternal misery: that though the afflictions themselves may remain yet the poyson of every affliction, which is the wrath of God, is taken away by Christ. Nay, whatsoever befalls us in this world, is so far from tending to eternal misery, that it is, through the love of God tending to thy good: that which doth seem to be most cross to thy desires, yet, it is such as tends to thy everlasting good in Christ. And this, one would think is enough for the satisfaction of mens hearts in the point of afflictions. At what was delivered before may be enough concerning our freedome from the Law; So what I have now writ in being chastened for our sins.

Take but these two things that no evil, no chastisement that shal befall us, shal tend to our everlasting misery nay, nothing shal befall us, but it is out of love and tends to our eternal good. These two being granted, one would think, one might grant any thing else; that God may shew a fatherly displeasure against us for our sins though not as a revenging iudge; that God may exercise his wisdom that way, to mannifest his holiness, and how he dislikes sin &c. One would think this might safely be granted, granting the other two. And indeed these two and the other concerning the Law, al our divines that are *Orthodox* grant, and these are enough to satisfie us about the free grace of God in Christ, and beleivers be thoroughly revived, and grounded in this, they may come to keep the assurance of their peace with God; for what shal hinder, either their sins, or Gods afflictions; now neither of these should hinder a beleivers peace, but that he may be able stil to preserve it, looking upon God through Christ. This is concerning the loosing of the assurance of our peace through weakness.

CHAP. 26.

We may loose the assurance of our Peace with God by our sinful walking.

SEcondly we may come to loose our peace, the assurance of our peace with God, through sinfulness; through our loose, and carnal walking with God; by this means we may come to fear, that such walking cannot stand with the condition of a Believer; and then indeed a believer is put to a nonplus and it will be a great while before he can be satisfied. In the other, when it is but a dayly infirmity, and when it is such as he strives against, he is easily satisfied; but when it comes to that, that it is very like walking after the flesh; as indeed many fall so foully, as you can scarcely perceive any difference between one that works after the flesh, and him; his exceedingly clouds the light of Gods favour, and exceedingly hinders the Comfort of his peace with God. And O, how justly may the Lord abraid thee, and say what did I set that infinit wisdom of mine a work to find out such a way of Reconciliation with thee? and is it worth no more then so, but that thou castest of the comfort of it, that thou mightest give liberty to thy looseness, and negligence, and to have the flesh have satisfaction? And so Christ himself may abraid thee: what, that I come from the bosom of my father, and take upon me the form of a servant, and be made a curse, that I might make peace between my father and thee, and is it worth no more but this; that thou castest away the Comfort of thy assurance for such a sinful distemper of heart, to give thy liberty to live after the flesh? Yea the Holy spirit may come, and abraid thee, and say. What, that I come, and reveal the deep counsell of God towards thee, and shew thee what those things were that God

from all eternity hath done for thee? shal I open the mysteries of Christ unto thee, and draw thy heart unto him; and shal I speak peace unto thee, and yet when al is done, thou shouldest regard this so little as for the satisfaction of some base distemper of heart, loose that which I have thus brought to thee, loose the comfort of al that I have done for thee? both Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, may abraid thy negligence, and the looseness of thy heart, and life. Yea, and thine own Conscience may tell thee, and say, did not I often hint unto thee, that if thou didst give liberty to thy selfe to walk thus, and thus loosely, thou shalt loose thy comfort, and thou shouldest come to apprehend God to be a terror to thee? and wilt thou even in these dayes of trouble, when men crie out of feares, and dangers take such a foolish course to loose thy peace with God? Is there any thing in the base distemper of thy heart that can countervail this los? Look upon those that walk holy lie, and clos with God, and let their Conversations abraid thee; they keep their hearts cleane, and maintaine their peace with God, and when they lie down, they lie down in peace, and they awake in the comfortable assurance of their peace: and when thy heare of warrs, and rumors of warrs, yet so long as they can look up to God as their reconciled Father, their hearts are fixed, and stable; and though they suffer the spoyleing of their goods, and the los of all that is deare unto them; yet they know, that within their bosom there is that which wil afford comfort enough unto them. And yet thou, through the giving satisfaction to some base, and sinful distemper, or lust, canst not think upon God without terror; canst not apprehend him, but as an enemy. O! unworthy soul; how shouldest thou be confounded in thy own thoughts, for the looseness, and negligence of heart in preserving that peace which Christ hath wrought between the Father, and thee, so strangely, and so wonderfully! Work these things (my Brethren) upon your hearts; any ground all upon

upon this; that we are reconciled to God in Christ; our Reconciliation was wrought by such a strang way as by Christ, and it cost his blood to work it: therefore, if we have any hope of our peace with God, we had need looke to it to preserve it.



C H A P. 27.

Use. 6. Give God the glory of our Reconciliation.

Againe, we have yet a further Use here If God be reconciled to us in Christ; it teacheth us to give God the glory of this great worke; adore the infinite wisdom, and mercy, and goodnes of God in this work of his towards us, reconciling us to himselfe in Jesus Christ. When Christ was born, the Angels Sang; glory to God on high; peace on earth; and it was upon that ground that they Sang it: as if they should have said. O Lord, what a way is here for thee to make peace upon earth; that thou shouldest send thy Son? here we looke upon a poore Infant in a manger, and this Infant is the eternal God the second person in Trinity, that hath thus taken mans nature upon him, and here he lyes in the cratch; even the same person that made the world. What a strang work of God is this to bring peace upon Earth; peace after such a way as this! glory be to God on high And this is the thing we should spend our dayes in; to adore, the infinite wisdom, and goodnes of God in this way of his, in reconciling the world to himselfe in Christ. God expects, that al the children of men to whom Christ comes to be made known to, should even fall upon their faces, and spend their days in adoring and praying, and magnifying this great work of God. God expects that we should have mighty high thoughts of this work; and if our thoughts be not high
of

of this work, and be not lift up above al Creatures, we do but take the name of God in vaine. God doth not care for any other glory we give him, except we give him the glory of this work. It is true when we see the works of God in the Earth, and in the Seas, we should glorifie Gods power, and Gods wisdom &c. But except your heart be taken with this master peece (as I may so terme it) with this great work of God, of Reconciling himselfe to the world in Christ; God wil reject al your other gloryfings of him. I mean so reject them, as he wil not accept of them in comparison: therefore this is the thing that God accepteth above al; and this is the comandement of God, that we should beleve in his son, and that we should give the Father the glory due unto him for reconciling himselfe to the world in his Son. This is the worke that shal be done in Heaven to a eternity: This is the thing that God himselfe delights in above al that ever he hath done; that takes up his heart above al. And if it do not take up your hearts, but you look upon it as an ordinary thing, and so indeed count the blood of Christ as a comon thing: O! know, it is a high indignity in that thing in which he doth expect most glory from. And let me say this, Hath God revealed this work of his Son unto thee; and is thy heart taken with this great work that God hath done; and art thou continually adoring of the greatness of that work of God? peace be unto thee; for this is as Good an evidence that thou art reconciled unto God in Christ, as any I know. But I must hasten.

CHAP.

CHAP. 28.

Uſe. 7. To love Christ, And do or ſuffer for him.

A Gain. Is it in Christ that we are reconciled unto God? O! let Christ be beloved by us. Let us say with the blessed Martyr Lambert: *None but Christ, None but Christ* which he spake too when he came to the stake to be burnt for Christ: a good Lesson for us by the way to take our, that may come to suffer very hard things for that which we have undertaken to do in obedience to God; yet for us to rejoyce when we come to suffer banishment, or loss of goods, or life, to rejoyce that ever our hearts were engaged in the waies of God; It is a sign of grace indeed. Many men when things prosper can go on, and rejoyce that they were engaged in such a business, but if they find that it shall not prosper by outward success, and that there are many miscarriages, they repent of what they have done; and that is the reason why we have so many run away now, and have withdrawn themselves from that which before they would spend their lives, and dearest blood in, and now only withdraw themselves when they see the work a little hot, but betray the cause: But here is a tryal of godliness; that if I have engaged my self in the waies of God; and God by his providence casts me into such waies as bring trouble unto me, yet I can rejoyce that ever I was engaged in them. Thus it was with the blessed Martyr that cried out none but Christ, even then when he was at the stake for Christ. It may be a Carnal heart might say. Yes, Lambert before you rejoyced in Christ, and talked of Christ, but what say you now? that you are come to be burnt for Christ, had you kept Christ within your self, you might have preserved this Body of yours; O! no, Christ was even then, sweet unto this

man, when he was going to suffer for him, and even then, ~~there but Christ~~. And indeed there is cause sufficient for Christ to be dear, and sweet unto us even in the midst of all sufferings. It is true, it may cause us to have the world to be our enemy; but what of that, when Christ hath made peace between us, and God the father; this satisfies the soul of a man to the full, and therefore the soul will love him, and will rejoyce in him, and bless God that ever he was engaged in any cause for the sake of Christ; because Christ is his blessed Reconciler, and because Christ hath made a peace between God, and his heart; although men are his enemies, yet he knows that through Christ God is his friend. Christ hath made men our enemies indeed but it is accidentally; but he hath made God our friend, and by himself hath; *Do you think I come to bring Peace? No, I come to bring a sword.* through the profession of the Gospel there is a great deal of enmity amongst men and I believe this rage, and enmity that is on foot here in England, Christ himself accidentally is the cause of it. On the one side, the desire of Gods people is for a thorough Reformation; and on the other side the hatred of mens spirits against Christ, and his Ordinances, will rather undo themselves then Christ shall have any Glory, they will rather put their Necks under an Antichristian yoke, yea, under the yoke of slavery, and make themselves, and their posterity slaves, then to be under the yoke of Christ; and this is the very bottom of that bitter mallice and rage that is now in the hearts of men, for there was never the like example of a people, that should be engaged one against another for their own mind. We might have peace, and we might have liberty if we would but unite our selves as one man against Papists, and others that are horridous, and abominably wicked to subdue them. But now because that peace, and liberty would bring in Reformation with it, and men should not have that liberty for their lusts as heretofore they have had, upon that

that they will have no peace at all, and they will rather be slaves to the wills and lusts of men, and to the Devil, then come under Christs yoke. Thus the Gospel is in great part, the cause of the sword by accident. What though? Shall we not love therefore, Shall we say? since there was so much preaching and profession, we have had such and such wars and strifes, and troubles: would men be quiet, and contented, they might be at peace. O! what is this, but to be contented to be without Christ, without truth, without peace of Conscience? so that because we would fain have these; that is, we would fain have Christ, and fain have the Gospel, and truth, and peace of Conscience, we can have no peace with men, but yet blessed be God for Christ; for although Christ be as a bundle of mirth, that hath much bitterness in it, yet let him lie between your breasts, let us rejoyce in him, let us love him, let us bleis God for him, and be glad that ever we were engaged in his Cause. O! that great Peace-maker between God and us, how dear should he be to our hearts? And as that Martyr said when he was to suffer for him, *What have I but one life to lay down for Christ?* O! that I had many; So should we say, *what, in our life in danger for Christ?* O! that we had many lives that might be all in danger for him. I heard a credible relation of a yong man, that was in the business that was in *Ant*, & had a shot through the shoulder, and fel down as dead, and for a while lay as dead, but recovering and getting up, and having strength enough to discharg a musket, said, *wel, I will spend one life more for this Cause.* The truth is, had we one, yea an hundred, a thousand lives, we might very wel bestow them in a cause wherein we might testifie our love to Christ, and bleis God that ever we were engaged therein though it hath brought such a disturbance between man, and man. And let this be one particular wherein you are to manifest your love to Jesus Christ as the great Reconciler; namely, that you

X 2

are

are willing to be reconciled one to another, to be reconciled to your Brethren for his sake: this is one good way to manifest your love to Christ. It may be such, and such have wronged you, and there is a great breach between such a neighbor and you. A natural man may be willing to be reconciled upon natural grounds; it is a troublesome thing to be in Contention, and it is more comfortable to be at peace with my Neighbor; and so through a natural love unto peace some will be contented there should be peace made between them, and the others they are fallen out withal; and it is good to go so far: But when you can bring your selves to this, not onely out of love to peace, because it is good for neighbors to be reconciled; but when you can think thus. Christ hath reconciled my soul when I was an enemy unto God; he hath come down from the bosom of his Father, and laid down his life for me: and Christ is dishonored when there are such breaches between friend and friend; therefore out of love to Jesus Christ who hath reconciled my soul unto the Father I am willing out of that very principle to be at peace with others.

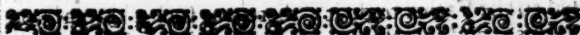
CHAP. 29.

Ulc. 8. In Seeking Reconciliation by Christ.

Firstly; if it be in Christ that we are reconciled unto God. Let us all learne in seeking Reconciliation to eye Christ, and carry him in our armes. If there be any of you that now begin to have your consciences stirred, and to be made sensible of the breach that is between God and you, do not rest in seeking peace in a natural way, but eye Jesus Christ; and when you look up unto God for peace; look unto him in Christ. Look upon Christ as the second person in Trinity, taking our nature upon him. Look upon Christ as the head of the

Covenant of Grace. Look upon Christ as the Lamb slain from the beginning of the world, and having made peace with his blood. Look upon Christ as sitting at the right hand of the Father making intercession.

Thus you should act your faith upon God in Christ when you are seeking peace with God. The reason why many people ly under the spirit of bondage for many years together, is this. Because they look upon God meerly as he is in himselfe, and do not look upon God through Christ, and so do not sanctifie the name of God in this great work of Reconciliation.



CHAP. 30

God [was] reconciling the world to himself from all eternity, opened.

AND thus we have gone through that point of Gods being reconciled to us in Christ. There is another; Namely. The Sixt thing propounded in the first Chapter viz. That God [was] reconciling the world to himself in his son. The work of our Reconciliation, is not a work of yesterday, it is a work that God was doing from all eternity; for the point is from that particke he [was] this work; for God to reconcile us to himself in his son, hath taken up the heart of God from all eternity. That place in *Times*, 1. 2. Is most remarkable for this In hope of eternal Life, which God that cannot lie, promised before the world began: he not onely promised it now; but he promised it before the world began. who was there before the world began to whom God made this promise? There was his Son Jesus Christ. So then; that is the meaning when he saith God [was] Reconciling himself to the world; that there was from all eternity, a transaction as it were between God the Father

Father, and God the son about our Reconciliation: there was not only a purpose in God from al eternity that he would reconcile the world to himself; but there was a real, and actual transaction between the Father and Son about it; an agreement between God the Father, and God the Son about it. Gods Willdom from al eternity was exercised to find out a way. Secondly, Gods purpose was from al eternity to do it. And Thirdly, There was a transaction between God the Father, and God the Son from al Eternity for to do it; they did covenant one with the other: God the Father told his Son what he required of him; and God the Son promised to the Father to do it; there was such a transaction as this; and therefore the scripture saith, it was promised before the world began; God the Father did promise to his Son before the world began what he would do for those that he would dy for; as if he should have said. Thou art content to lay down thy life, and to shed thy blood? Yea, saith the Son, I am: wel, saith the Father, I wil be reconciled unto them, and I wil save their souls; they shal have eternal life for their portion; this I promise thee; and so, it was promised to Christ first. It is true the promises of the Gospel are sweet, and they should rejoyce our hearts; I had perished in my affliction saith *David*, had I not had regard unto thy word; nothing more sweeter to a soul then the promises are; but though the promises that are made to us in the Gospel are sweet; yet the promise that was made to the Son of God, is infinitely more sweet. And this is the thing that I should have shewed you: not only how this was promised unto Christ; but the excellent comfort that this is unto the Saints; that they are now to look upon al that is done unto them, and upon all the works of Gods grace to them, not as a new thing; not as an accidental thing that comes. As if we should have peace here in the Commonwealth it would be pretious to us, if it should be upon these terms, and we would al rejoyce much

much in what should befall us in a way of a safe peace : But our peace with God is not wrought with God so, as if we were perishing, and then Gods providence came and turned all about againe. No, our peace with God is a thing plotted from al eternity ; God did as it were contrive it in Heaven before any world was made : God thought of this work of Reconciling himselfe unto the world ; yea, unto thee in particular if thou beest a Believer, a broken hearted sinner, before even the Havens, or the Earth were made, God had actual thoughts of thee stil ; and there was a Covenant between God the Father and the Son, for thy soul in particular ; and though God foresaw thou wouldest sin against him, and turne enemy to him, yet there was a consultation between the Father, and the Son from al eternity to bring chy soul home unto God, and to pardon thy sin. So that thou art to look upon al the works of Gods grace towards thee here in bringing thee to his Son, and upon all the comforts thou hast from his Son, as the fruit of Gods eternal plot, of Gods eternal counsel with his Son : and that although it doth but now break forth, yet it was that which was in the holom of the Father, and the Son from al eternity ; and this indeed wil sweeten our Reconciliation with God, and al means tending thereunto. As, doth God send but the word of Reconciliation to bring you home unto Christ ? this was that which there was a Contrivance of in the heart of God from al eternity. That in such a time, such a man should live, in such a place, and such a Minister should be sent amongst them, and such a text of scripture should be opened, and such truths should be preached, and if thou findest God bringing of these truths home to thy soul : know, it is a fruit of that eternal counsel that was between the Father, and the Son before the world began ; and a branch of the promise that God made to his Son from al eternity. Do'st thou, when thou comest to the word begin to feel thy mind inlightned, to know Jesus Christ ? doth thy

thy heart begin to be melted, is thy soul drawing after Christ? do not look upon this as a meer accidental thing; do not say only, What a providence of God is it that called me to such a Sermon? at such time I went for company sake to such a place; but when I came, I felt the Spirit of God stirring in my Soul; yea, I find a beginning of that which I hope I shall have cause to bless God for, for ever. Do not look upon this as a meer accidental thing, or as an act of providence only; But know, that this very work of God towards thee, is no other then the fruit of the promise that God made to his Son before the world began. God promised his Son, that it should be so ordered, that at such a time there should be such a Text, and such a Sermon preached, and that it should so fall out that thou shouldst be there. And so likewise any peace of Conscience; any work of grace whatsoever, is a fruit of this promise; and therefore joyce in this; that Gods heart is broken open unto thee; and that which was in his bosom from al eternity is made known unto thee.

Those men that are not converted til they be old, have cause to be sorrowful, and to be troubled for that: It is true I have cause to bless God, that at length God is pleased to open his heart unto me; But what a misery is it to me that I lived so long before I came to know God the Fathers purpose to my heart, had I embraced the Gospel first, I had then been made acquainted with the counsel of God from al eternity concerning me. And a mighty encouragement it is to yong people to bless God for this, that God begins with them betimes; it is a sign that Gods heart is ful when he begins with one so early. For the truth is, Gods heart was towards thee from everlasting, and the business was transacting from everlasting. Some, though the heart of God be towards them, yet he keeps it a long time from breaking open til they grow to their middle age, til old age it may be, and then he discloseth himself. As *Joseph* would not open his heart
to

to his Brethren for many daies together. So there are many people, that God lets them go on a long while in waies of sin, he withdraws himself, and denies himself to open his heart to them, but at length he doth: But then how much better is it when God shal open his heart betimes unto a man? Would not *Josephs* Brethren have been glad that he should have discovered himself unto them and opened his heart unto them at the first coming? So, you that do begin now to have the day of grace dawn into your understandings, and God begins betimes to open himself, and those things that were in his heart before the beginning of the world discovers them to thee; and God cannot (as we may speak with reverence) stay any longer; but as soon as thou art able to receive in those thoughts of the heart of God; he lets them out unto thee. O! bless God for it. And this will prevent abundance of sin and sorrow, and make thee go on with comfort all thy daies. This point also should be a marvelous Comfort to the people of God. That their peace with God doth not so much depend upon the Covenant God hath made with them; but it depends upon the Covenant God hath made with *Jesus Christ* from all eternity; and that is the roote and bottom of their peace, and Reconciliation with God. Alas were it a dependance upon a Covenant between us, and God, and what he requires of us; we could not have firm peace: But when we know this; that the roote, and ground, of our peace, and happiness, dependeth upon that transaction that there was between the Father, and the Son from all eternity, and upon the Covenant that was between them: O! this is that which should rejoyce the hearts of the Saints, and be a mighty foundation of their Faith, and inable them to go through the world, and all difficulties with Comfort.

CHAP. 31

*The work of our Reconciliation with God in Christ
hath been a doing from al eternity.*

In the last Chapter we came to the first point that
formerly hath been propounded in the first Chapter,
and that is this. That God [Was] reconciling him-
selfe to the world in Christ. [Was] and when was he?
Even from all eternity, he was reconciling himselfe to
the world. That point I did then name, and shall now
a little inlarge it, and so proceed to some other. The
point is this.

*Dost. That the worke of our Reconciliation with
God in Christ, is not a worke of yesterday, it is a worke
that hath been doing from al eternity; it is not a thing
that salout as it were accidentally, but a plotted thing,
a thing that hath been plotted from al eternity. I gave
you then but only one scripture for it. Likel ad some
more now, and open it more fully. That scripture I
gave in the 1 Tit. 2. Is hope of eternal life which God
that cannot lie, promised before the world began. Now
to whom did God promise it before the world began?
The first promise that was made, and that we read of,
was to Adam in paradise, the seed of the woman that
breake the Serpents head. O! but there was a promise
beyond that promise; a promise made before Adam was,
or before the Angells were, or before the world began;
a promise of eternal life, which is the accomplishment of
our reconciliation with God; this promise could be
made to no other, but to the Son of God that was
with the Father, and the delight of the Father; nor
only the delight of the Father as he is the Son eternally
begotten of the Father, but the delight of the Father*

as he undertooke the great work of Reconciliation between God, and us; and this promise was made to him from the Father; the promise of Reconciliation, and eternal life before the world began. So that by that scripture it appeares; that there was from al eternity, not onely a purpose, or a determination in God to reconcile us to himself; but there was an agreement, a transaction between the Father, and the Son about it, and a Covenant passed between them. God the Father promiseth somewhat, and the Son promiseth somewhat, and so they make up the agreement one with another from al eternity.

First, There was a transaction of this great work of Reconciliation between God the Father, and the Son from all eternity; and for this I shal give you a scripture or two more. 2 Timo. 1. 9. *Who hath saved, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works; But according to his own purpose, and grace which was given us in Jesus Christ before the world began.* Here is not onely a purpose, but here is grace besides purpose; there was not onely a purpose in God before the world began, but there was somewhat more; here is purpose and grace, and this is given to us too; it is not only intended for us (that is observable) but it was given us, and given us before the world began: how given us? could God give any thing to us before the world began; could God give any thing to us before we were? It is therefore added; it was *his purpose, and grace, and given to us [in Christ]* before the world began. As it is possible for an Inheritance to be made over to one before he was borne; sometimes between man and man, there is something made over thus, to our heires lawfully begotten, though there be none born, yet it is given them; and there is solemnity in Law concerning it. Perhaps it is given to some as a fee; that if such, and such should be borne, they should enjoy it, or that they shal employ this for the benefit of such, and

such that shal be born; so Jesus Christ stood before the Father (as we may terme it) as a feece in trust, as the head of a Covenant, and there were transactions between the Father, and him; there was not onely a purpose in God to reconcile himselfe to us, but there was grace given to us in Christ; there was an actual donation of this unto Christ before the world began; that so we might come to Injoy it.

Again, another Scripture for this is the 1. Cor. 2. 7. which speakes somewhat of this also, though not altogether so fully as the former. The words are these. *But we speake the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom which God ordeyned before the world to our glory.* He doth not only speake here of Gods Electing, of Gods ordaining us to Glory; but he speakes of the whole mystery of the Gospel, which he calles the hidden wisdom of God. Now this doctrine of Reconciliation which I have been preaching to you, about that we are reconciled to God in Christ, this is the hidden wisdom of God which was kept hid from the beginning of the world, and yet ordeyned before the world to our glory. God had contrived al this doctrine of Reconciliation, and purposed, that in time it should come to be revealed to us; as it is at this day.

There is yet another Scripture for this which is very remarkable. It is in the 17. *John.* you shal finde in that chapter many expressions to that purpose; that those that did beleev in Christ were such as God the Father had given him; and you may find by divers expressions there apparantly, that there was an agreement, a transaction between the Father, and the son, long before the thing was done; verse 16. *I have manifested my name to the men whom gavest me out of the world; whom they were, and thou gavest them me, and they have kept thy word;* he doth not speake merely of giving them at this time; but of Giving them to be son before now, for he makes that to be the ground of their beleife; he doth

doth not make their giving them to him to be believing; but he makes their believing, and the keeping of the word of faith, to be a fruit of Gods giving them to his Son, the fathers giving them to his Son is the foundation of their believing, and hence it is that in time they come to beleive; becaule God the father hath from al eternity given them to his Son: that is the argument of Christ & this indeed makes the difference between some that beleive, & others that do not beleive. There are som that are of mean parts, poor people, and yong ones that beleive in Jesus Christ, and the great misteries of the Gospel; others that have more understanding, that are learned men, they do not beleive. That which makes the difference is this: that God the father gives some to his son to reconcile, and he doth not give others: and this is the argument of Christ in that 17, *John*. he makes the foundation of their faith to be God the fathers giving of them to the Son. So that it is apparent in Scripture, that there hath been (before we come to beleive, ye a before the world was) a transaction between the father, and the Son about our reconciliation. *God was reconciling himself to the world;* So that our Reconciliation with God, and the having our sinns not imputed must be considered in three periods of time. The first is (if we may tal that a period of time, which rather was before time) that which was from al eternity with the Son; there God was reconciling himself unto us. Secondly; when Christ came into the world, and was upon the Cross, and suffered; there was an actual imputation of the sins of al the Elect unto him, and a laying of them upon Christ; there was then a special act of God imputing and charging upon his Son, the Sins of al the elect. Thirdly when God calls any sinner to beleive; then there is an other act of God passing the Sentence of absolution upon the Soul, an actual passing of it, which we call Justification. As it is between man, and man; you know the law may be satisfied for the prisoner, and yet the Prisoner

Prisoner nor absolved; the Prisoner is not acquitted, til the sentence be so solemnly pronounced by the Judge, though the verdict be brought in, not guilty, yet he is not acquitted until the Judge pronounce the sentence of absolution. So, though Jesus Christ in his sufferings when he was crucified, satisfied the law for all that should believe in him; yet there is required a pronouncing of the Sentence by the Judge for the acquitting of, which is our Justification. And yet sometimes we know, that after the sentence is pronounced by the Judge, the malefactor may lie in Prison til the fees be pay'd. Just thus it is with us: after our justification, yet we remain in this world, and have the fetters of our corruption upon us, have the fetters of afflictions, and troubles upon us til we have pay'd the dues to nature, and the dispensations of Gods Providence. One that is Elect, and not a believer, he is as a prisoner that hath the Law satisfied for him, though he doth not know it; yet certainly he shall be saved: One that is Elect, and a believer is as a prisoner that hath the Judge pronouncing the sentence of absolution upon him; yet afterwards, so long as the Believer is in this world, he is like a Prisoner that hath had his sentence pronounced upon him to acquit him, but he lies in Prison til he hath pay'd his fees. But those in Heaven; they have not only the Law satisfied, and the fees pay'd, but they are set at liberty also, and are in their Fathers house. There are Several times therefore of Gods manifestation of our Reconciliation to us not imputing our Sins unto us.

But though there be such several workings of God, yet this doth not argue any change in God, which is an Objection that many through weakness make; that because God doth this thing, and the other thing, for the other thing that was not done before, therefore they would argue, as if there were a change in God, and therefore would conclude; that there is nothing that is now done, but was done, and that as it is now done, so it was done everlastingly.

But

But we are to know this; that Gods actual pronouncing of a sentence of abblution now; was not done before; doth no more argue a change in God; than Gods glorifying the Saints in Heaven now, who were not glorified before. To be justified in time, doth no more argue a change in God, than to be glorified in time argueth it. The Saints upon Earth are not yet glorified, and yet they shal be glorified; and that argues no change in God. So the Elect that are not yet Beleevers, are not yet justified in that sense the Scripture speaks of Justification; yea they shal be justified; and that argues no change in God.

But that we may further understand this, how God was from all Eternity reconciling himself unto the world; yet there are severall periods of time wherein there are severall workings of God towards a sinner, which indeed are implied in the words of the Text. God was reconciling the world to himself; he [Was] a doing of it; and this work before it comes to the accomplishment, hath severall periods of of time. And to the end you may understand it the better; You must know, that there is a great deal of difference between those actions of God which are in himself, according to his own nature; and those actions of his towards the creature that are in a suitable way to the Creature; and for the want of the right understanding of the difference between these two, many people do most grossly mistake and gather many absurd Conclusions. They speake from Gods infinite; and unconceivable way of acting in himself, to those acts of God that are suitable to the Creature, and received by the Creature; when they heare of any thing of the workings of God received by the creature, they would understand that in the same manner, or as if it were to be understood in the same manner as those acts of God in himselfe. I will shew you how great a difference there is between them.

First, Take the Acts of God in himself, and this is

true, the act of God is the Being of God himself, Gods Essence, and his act in himself, are all one : but now the act of God as the Creature receives it, is not the Essence of God, for the Creature is not capable of Gods essence, for then the Creature should be infinite. But the act of God as it is in himself, is God himself, and so it is infinite; there is no act as it is in God, but it is an infinite act because it is God. As now that which the Creature receives cannot be infinite. So the acts of God in himself, are all eternal, and there is no difference of time with God; there is not time past, present, and to come. Look upon the acts of God as he worketh in himself; whatsoever act there is in God, even the glorifying of the Saints; so far as Considered in God, is eternal; And there is no difference of time at all in the acts of God, as in himself; But if one consider those acts as the Creature receives them; then we must look at the difference of time, one, at one time, another at another, and another at another, received by the Creature. And you must take heed of too much boldness when we speak of God; when God sometimes manifesteth his workings as the Creature receives; we must not then thinke, that these are the acts of God as they are in himself, which are infinite, and to be conceived in an infinite manner, so as nothing but an infinite understanding is able to reach, and to conceive of. Therefore those men that think to fathom the arts of God as they are in himself, they are too too presumptuous; for only an infinite understanding is able to conceive of them; we must conceive of them as the Creature receives them, and so as they are revealed in the word; and this is the substance of what is revealed concerning Gods working towards us; namely; that from eternicy, there was a transaction between him, and the Son in such an unconceivable manner as we know not of; and that in time the Lord did lay our sins upon his Son on the Cross, and that afterwards when his good time shall come to call a sinner to himself, then he doth justify him, and pronounce

pronounce a sentence of absolution. But first, he calls them; So the scripture saith those whom he hath called, he hath justified. The Scripture makes calling of a sinner to go before justification; therefore whatsoever is in God from eternity; yet it is apparent that (speaking of justification as the scripture speakes of it) Vocation goes before, and that justification is no otherwise from eternity, than Vocation. God may as truly be said to call a sinner out of his natural estate from eternity, as to justify a sinner from eternity in that sence that the scripture speakes of it in *Rom. 8*. But, when we speak of justification ordinarily, we speak of it in the sence that the scripture speakes of it here, and so Vocation is first, and then justification, and afterwards glorification. So that though the Lord be pleased to reveale much of the mystery of the Gospel to us, and tel us he hath been reconciling himself to us from eternity, yet we must understand this in a sober way, and take heed we do not vanish in our own thoughts when we come to search in to it.

CHAP. 32.

Five Uses of the former Doctrine.

A Word, or two further for the Application of this (for something hath been already done in the last Chapter) and then we pass to another point.

Use. 1.

Here we see the infinite love of God, that he hath been pleased thus to think of us poor Creatures from everlasting, to make it his worke to reconcile us to himself: and here is the foundation of the sweetness, and

comfort of al the mercies of God, to those that are reconciled unto him; that they are the fruits of eternal love of God to us. And here is the foundation likewise of the establishment of the Saints; that their happiness doth not depend so much upon the Covenant that God hath made between himself, and them, as the Covenant that God hath made betwixt himself & his Son. For the covenant is two fold; either between God, and Christ, or between Christ and us. Now, it is true, much doth depend upon our keeping Covenant with Christ; but our happiness; and Salvation, and indeed al our good doth cheifely depend upon the Covenant between the Father, and the Son.

Use, 2.

Againe, Here we may see how to answer that question of some Atheists; what God was doing before the world began? I remember it is said, that when that question was asked by some in the primitive times; the answer was. That God was making of Hell for such curiouse Inquiritors. But here we have a further, answer to give then that; namely; That God was exercised from al eternity in the business of Reconciling the world to himselfe. God had (as it were) the idea, and the platform of all things before him, and saw man how he was made in his Innocency, and saw him fall, and saw how he should rise againe, and how he should be converted, and glorified. Al the platform of al these things was before God from a eternity. As a work-man when he goes to build an House, or to build a ship, he hath the platform thereof in his head, before he strikes a strook. So the great work of our Election, of our Vocation, Justification, Reconciliation, adoption, sanctification, and glorification, the Lord had the platforme of al before him; it was all in his Head as it were, and he was exercised about it before the world began: so that if thou art a Believer, it now comes to be knownen; that the Lord from

from all eternity was exercised about thee, and thy good and about the Contrivance of thy Salvation, and fore saw how thou wouldest fall from him, and be made a child of wrath, and an Heir of Hell. And then he saw a way how to recover thee out of that condition, and how to bring this to pass; how he would cast thy lot, to live in such a place, and in such an age of the world wherein the Gospel, and the mysteries thereof should be preached; and that thou shouldest come under such a ministry; and that just at the preaching of such a sermon, such a truth should be darted into thy heart, and applied unto thee; and that then he would send his holy spirit to fasten that truth upon thy heart; the Lord plotted all this from eternity: and this is that which the Lord was busied about (as we may speak with reverence) before the world began.

Use 3.

Another Use is this. It is a good establishment for us to help us to believe that eternal happiness that is to come; that part of eternity that is a *parte post*; Because we have God revealeing his love to us in that part of eternity that is a *parte ante*. God hath shewed, that from eternity he hath been plotting our good: Surely then it is no more for God to make us happy on the other side of eternity, then it was for him to be plotting our happiness in the former part of eternity. So that a Believer may see his happy condition in this. He is now enjoying that peace of Gods love that is between two Oceans of eternity of love. As if there were a little River, and on each side there were a mighty Ocean of Water: now the streame of Gods love and mercy runs towards thee, & thou now dost receive abundance of good from God; the Lord sweeteneth thy life, and now comforts, and refresheth thy heart with his grace; art thou glad of this; and is this peece of the mercy of God

sweet unto thee? poor soul, look on this side, and look on the other side, and see those Oceans of Eternal Love, on both sides towards thee. Alas, this is a little that thou hast now; but if thou lookest on one side; there thou shalt see that eternal love of God that was toward thee before the world was made. And if thou lookest on the other side, thou shalt see eternal life in all that glory which shall never have an end, which thou shalt actually be possessed of; and that which thou art for the present in the possession of, is a little stream in comparison of these two great Oceans of love that are from eternity, to eternity. And when thou hearest that God intends to make thee happy for ever, and that thou shalt continue a glorious, and blessed creature as long as God himself shall live; and that thou shalt be happy as long as God shall be happy. Perhaps thou thinkest, how is this possible, is it possible for such a poor fraile creature as I am to live to be happy as long as God himself shall be happy? Yes, do not doubt of it, though it be a great thing, for God hath had a love to thee from all eternity; therefore, though it is true there be many frailties, and many sins of thine, yet that cannot hinder thee of that eternal mercy that God hath been plotting for thee. Methinks the Apostle argues after this manner *Galla. 3. 17. The Covenant that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the Law which four hundred, and thirty years after cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.* Observe the Apostles argument; the (Law which he) cannot disannul the promise of Grace; Why? Because it was four hundred, and thirty years after the promise was made, and that which came so long after cannot disannul that which was before. We may make use of the argument thus. Surely if thou beest one that belongest to this transaction of God with his Son; the sins that now thou fallest into, cannot take away Gods love from thee, cannot hinder thee from being happy for ever; VVhy? Because

Because the Covenant of God with his Son for thy happiness was not four hundred and thirty years ago, but hundred of millions of thousands years ago; therefore that which is now done, cannot disannul that which was from all eternity. Comfort thy self with this, when thou hearest that God was reconciling himself to the world, even before the world it self was, yea, from all Eternity.

USE. 4.

Again; It should stir al to begin betimes to get grace and Reconciliation with God. You that are yong ones, and are now in the flower of your youth crowned with rose buds. Consider this: God, he was working for your good before the world; he you working for his glory as soon as you can. Shal not I give the beginning of my years, my first fruits to God who loved me, and was working for me before ever I was borne; therefore it is fit he should have as much of my time as can be,

USE. 5.

Yea, this should also be a mighty argument to put us alon to be constant in holy walking with God, because the lord hath been working from Eternity, and will be working to eterniry for our good, and therefore that time which we have, we should serve, and glorifie God in it. For suppose we should live ten thousand years, or ten thousand millions of years in this world; Suppose God should require us to live, and serve him in the way we do now, Eternally; we should not think much of it, for we serve God but one peece of eternity, that is, that part of eternity which is coming; But God is merciful to us in both peeces of Eternity; his mercy is to us on both sides from everlasting to everlasting; God is before hand with us in his mercy, and in his love; his love was from eternity, and shal Continue to eterniry.

ry, and therefore we should not think much to serve God, and to glorifie him in waies of holiness al the time that we are appointed to live, and when we have don al we cannot com neer to those workings which he hath been at for us. But I shall at this point the Lord seal it with his blessing upon our spirits.



CHAP. 33.

Of Gods Reconciling the world to himselfe.

THE next point being the seventh propounded in the first chapter is: *That God was Reconciling the [World] to himselfe.* So the text Saith; and so the Point is. That God hath been reconciling the [World] to himselfe. This which we have in the text heer it is the very same in effect with that we have in *John. 3. 16.* So God loved the [World] that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever beleeved in him should not perish but have Everlasting life.

*The world you wil say; how is that? did God recon-
cile al the world, to himselfe?*

No, we are therefore to understand this saying here *as an indefinite Proposition, and not as if it were an universal Proposition*; and the right understanding of this difference between an universal, and an indefinite proposition is of great use to us, both in this, and many other points of divinity. An Universal Proposition, is that, that speaketh of the general, as it includes every particular under it. An indefinite Proposition, doth but speake of the general, and not include every particular under it, but only many. As thus. If one should say, that such a man teacheth all the Children in such a Towne; we do not mean that there is no perricular Child that is not taught, for there are infants there; and

and there are perhaps some that are not taught at al; but we mean thus; that he teacheth, those Children that are taught; there is none that he excepteth but if they come to him, he wil teach them, he is there ready, and stands prepared to teach them; and in this sense he may be said to teach al the Children in the Town; that is; there is a genneral proposition without a particuler restriction, though every individual is not containd in it. This now is an Indefinite proposition, or speech. But when we Say a general proposition, then we speak of al particulers none at al can be excepted, But must come under that proposition: and this wil help us much in other Points of divinity. As in the promise: *I will be thy God and the God of thy Seed.* We must understand this Promise by the way of an indefinite proposition, and so al understand it that understand it aright. Many that understand not the difference between these two, think they have a strong objection, and say; This promise cannot be made of the godly, for then the Children of the Godly would be godly too. No, it is not an Universal proposition that includeth every particular, but an indefinite one; that is thus: God, promiserh to be the God of his people, and of their seed; that is, he wil shew mercy to their Seed, rather then to the Seed of others, and he wil rather draw the line of Election through their Loyns then through the Loyns of others, he wil take them, not every particular of them, but take them indefinitely, and not reveal which of them he wil take; whether this Person, or that Person individually; But he speaks indifinitly; and his meaning is, that those that are the Seed of his people shall be brought into a neerer Pale; into a neerer limit of Gods Grace, then the Seed of others, and he wil be gracious to their Seed, rather then to others. And so here, *God saved the World, and reconciled the World,* the propositions are to be understood alike, indefinitely; not that he loveth, or reconcileth every individual Person in the world. Even as he is the God of the Seed of the Saints.

Saints. It is not to be understood that he is the God of every particular one of them; he is pleased to express himself thus indefinitely, and not generally.



CHAP. 34.

Gods reconciling [the World] to himself, cannot be meant of every individual man; proved by Scripture: And Three Reasons.

BUt for the opening of this. That God is reconciling himself unto the world; that is, unto man-kind, to humane nature, though not to every individuall person that is in humane nature. I shal shew you.

First, That it cannot be meant of every individual.
And then:

Secondly, Why it is expressed in such a large realm as the *World*.

First, I shal make it appear, That it cannot be meant of every particular man, or woman in the world : Nay, indeed, the truth is, that there is a great part in the world and such a part as the world may receive denomination from too, that Christ hath rejected, & shal never be reconciled to: and that is clear in *John. 17.* where Christ saith, *That he prayed not for the World,* surely then he died not for the world : there are some in the world that Christ did not so much as pray for ; How was God reconciling himself to the world then, when as Christ professeth, he did not pray for the world ? It appears by this, that we are not to understand it of every particular man, or woman in the world ; there are some that are in the world that God was never reconciling himself unto.

1. And besides this Text, it appears from hence, Because

Because if God were reconciling himself to al the world, then al should certainly beleeve, and be saved; Why? Because that Christ should lay down a price for al, and the blood of Christ doth as wel pardon the sin of unbelief as any other sin. If there be any one that Christ hath laid down his life for, he hath purchased at the hands of God the Father, that this Soul should be delivered from the power of unbelief; and Faith it is a blessing that comes unto us by Christ, as wel as any other blessing. I appeal to you; Is not Faith a spiritual blessing, as wel as any other Grace? *Eph. 1. 3. Blessed be the God, and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who hath blessed us with all Spiritual blessings in Heavenly places in Christ.* So that al spiritual blessings are in Christ; if they are in Christ, then Faith is in Christ, for Faith is a spiritual blessing, and then Christ hath purchased Faith, for whosoever Christ hath died for, they must beleeve in time; Christ hath not left the work of our salvation loose upon this adventure: I wil lay down my life, and in case men beleeve, they shal be reconciled; No, Christ laid down his Life to purchase of God the Father, that men should beleeve, as wel as he hath purchased eternal life it self; and therefore if thou beleevest, know, it is the fruit of the purchase of Christ, as wel as Heaven it self is. So then, if God were reconciled to all the world, al should come, and be actually Beleevers; But in that they do not, it is apparent, that Christ never intended it. That is one Reason.

2. And then. Another argument may be this. If this were so, that Christ had laid down a price for the world in general, and only those that are left to themselves to beleeve, or not beleeve, should come to be saved: Then the great things that are contained in these great Mysteries of godlineis, and the great works of God, both in Election, Redemption, Justification, & Glorification, must rather depend upon mans wil, than upon any

work of God ; for say they ; God indeed hath wrought al this ; but it is in case men beleeve, he hath left it to them to beleeve, or not beleeve, and so al the great councils of God must depend upon mans wil : No certainly, Christ hath not left it so, but those that he hath reconciled unto God, he hath so reconciled them to him, as that they shal beleeve, and this is not al the world.

3. Further: If this were so, that Christ hath payed a price, and left it to mans free will to beleeve, or not beleeve; the truth is, *Judas* would have been as much beholding to Christ for Salvation, as *Peter*. But you wil say, *Judas* was never saved, *Peter* was; But according to these men, Christ did as much for *Judas* as for *Peter*, for he shed his blood for *Judas* as well as for *Peter*; only *Peter* by the act of his free wil, beleeved, and the other did not. So that the truth is, according to the doctrine of these men, *Peter* shal be no more beholding to Christ at the day of judgment, than *Judas* was. *Peter* indeed must acknowledg that he was saved by Christ; but if their doctrine be true, he may wel say; Lord; thou hast done no more for me, than for *Judas*, and what was more, I did that my selfe, thou sheddest thy blood alike for us, but I beleeved, and he did not, if he had beleeved he might have been saved as wel as I; so hereby the grace of God is exceedingly dishonored by these men that hold universal Redemption by Christ, and make it to include al the world. There are many arguments that might be used, which because they are not so cleer to the ordinary capacities of people, we shal leave further mentioning of them at this time; and shal only ad; that it is Arminian doctrine, to teach, that there is a price payed by Christ for al the world, and it is left unto men to beleeve, or not to beleeve: And that is true evangelical doctrine; That there is a price payed by Christ, and God hath resolved upon such, and such particular ones in the world that he wil be reconciled unto, and that they shal beleeve, and be everlastingly saved.



C H A P. 35.

Why Gods Reconciling to himselfe is expressed in so large a terme as the [World.] Six Reasons thereof.

BUt you wil say ; If this be so, that God hath made such a difference ; that there are some that he hath been from al eternity reconciling himself unto, and not al ; what is the reason of this phrase ? why doth he say that he loved the world ? and that he was reconciling himself unto the world without any distinction ? One would think, God should rather have expressed it thus: That he Reconciling himself to some in the world, and that he loved some in the world, and not the world in general. No, God would rather exprels it in this general phrase upon these Six Reasons.

Reason, 1.

First, He would say, *the World*, to exclude Angells that are not so properly of this world. But this doth not come up so fully to the Reason ; why God would rather say the world, than this, or that man in the world. And therefore.

Reason, 2.

In the Second place ; another Reason is this. Because he would shew the sufficiency of the death of Christ, and of the work of Redemption ; that there is enough in it, if it were to save never so many worlds.

Reason. 3.

Thirdly, Another Reason of it is this. That God might shew, that in the Ministry of the Gospel, none shal be excluded, No, not the worst of sinners that are in the world ; and therefore God doth not say in the Ministry of the Gospel ; this, or that particular man or woman Christ died for ; but generally, he died for the world. Because he would hereby shew, that he hath not excluded the worst, and vildest sinner in the world ; and that those that are the most notorious, and the greatest sinners in the world may come in and be Reconciled. If God had expressed it thus ; There are some in the world that I have been reconciling my self unto from all eternity : Then may a sinner say ; surely, if there be but some, God never intended me that have been so wicked a wretch, so notorious a sinner. But therefore God would not express it so, but in the most general termes, to the end that there should not be any one sinner in the world have this plea: Lord, I was excluded. No, saith God, I wil have the Ministry of my Gospel go in such generall termes, as that every sinner shal have encouragement to come in, and receive mercy. Therefore you shal find in that last of Mark 15, where Christ gives his Commission to his disciples to preach. He saith ; *ga in to al the world, and in each the Gospel to every Creature ;* that is, to man, who is a little world, an Epitome of every creature. To the Gentiles also, who had been denyed this favor of the Gospel, as if they had been none of Gods creatures. If thou beest a creature, the Gospel is to be preached to thee. There is to be a general tender of Grace, and mercy to every Creature throughout the whole world, to the greatest sinners that live upon the face of the Earth. Great sinners, and smal sinners, al of them are to have the offer of Reconciliation with God ; And the Ministers of the Gospel are to preach in the name of God, that the Lord doth

doct tender unto every one, this offer of mercy and Salvation. This to be done ministerially to every Creature we shal come preach to; not only great sinners, but those that are of the meaneſt condition in the world. For ſome may ſay; If God wil ſhew mercy to ſome in the world, ſure it muſt be to ſome great ones in the world, thoſe that are eminent, and may do him a great deal of ſervice; alas, what ſervice can God have from me a poor creature that lives al day long in a poor dark hole, that can do him no work, or ſervice; will ever God have any thought of me? Yes, if thou be a creature of God, and liveſt in the world, thou art no more excluded from Reconciliation with God, than the Kings, and Emperors of the Earth; and it may be God may think of thee in that poor hole of thine a thatched cottage when he neglecteth, and paſſeth by the great Monarks of the world. Therefore this expreſſion is ſo large; that thoſe that are the pooreſt people in the world, and the greateſt ſinners in the world, may know, they are not excluded from the offers of grace in the Goſpel. This is a third Reason. And then.

Reason. 4.

A fourth Reason why it goes in ſuch rearmes as theſe. That hereby the Lord may ſhew; that thoſe that ſhal actually come in to be reconciled unto him, they muſt come in while they are in this world. That thoſe perſons that are capable of Reconciliation, are only ſuch perſons as live in the world: If they be not reconciled before they are gone out of the world, they are never to be reconciled: therefore is this phraſe, God is Reconciling the world to himſelf. As if he ſhould ſay: If once you are gone out of the world, and are not reconciled unto God before you are gone, you are loſt for ever. The object of this my grace, is on ly thoſe people that live in the world, if they paſs away this time, and be

be not reconciled unto me while they live here, they shall never be reconciled; for God was not reconciling himself to men that are in Hell, for they are not of this world, they are gone out of the world; they were suffered by Gods patience to live a great while in the world, and here they filled the world with sin as much as in them lay; Now they are gone out of the world, and are gone from the shine of Gods grace, which shall never come to shine upon them more; they shall never come to hear any offer of the Gospel more. This is a fourth Reason.

Reason. 5.

A Fifth Reason is this. Hereby God wil shew his wonderful love, and free Grace to wretched Creatures; that he should regard such vild Creatures as those that live in the world; for the world, alas, what is it? It is a dunghill of filth; and as the Apostle saith, 1. *John* 5. 19. *The whole world lies in wickedness*; it lies as a dead

Nil mundum in mundo, nihil aliud est totus mundus ante conversionem, nisi aut bara porcorum aut collovie, rapidorum canum. Aug. As a filthy hogsty or kennel of mad Dogs.

Dog or Carcass that lies in a Common Sewer, in a ditch, all in slime, and filth; Now that God should set his heart upon the world, what an infinite, and wonderful love, and free grace is this? The truth is, before our Conversion, we do all lie in wickedness, as a Carrion, or a dead Dog that lies in a Cart-way, all in gore, & mire; So are we in our natural

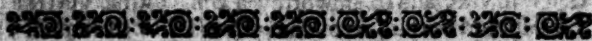
Condition, and yet that the great God of Heaven should send his own Son into the world to die for such a one; that he should make such a one an heir of Heaven, and of eternal life; that such a one should become a member of his Son, and so have everlasting Communion with himself; & that this should be plotted by God from all eternity; What an infinite love of God is this? And again; that the world lies in wickedness; the world that

that is so vile, and so unworthy a thing; that yet the Lord should be thus reconciling the *World* to himself; What an infinite, and unconceivable, free Grace of God is this?

Reason, 6.

The Sixth Reason is this. They that shall live in the world shall generally come in to God; and indeed be actually reconciled in time. Though the world for the present be not so generally reconciled unto God: yet the Lord hath his time when the Jews shall be called, and the fulness of the Gentiles shall come in, and we shall see further Reason of the generality of this expression. God hath promised that Christ shall possess the utmost parts of the Earth, and that the Heirs of the promise shall inherit the *World*. I understand it literally. *Rom. 4. 23.* God made a promise to *Abraham*, and to his Seed, that he should be the Heir of the *World*. And this Promise is yet to be fulfilled in a literal sense. In some spiritual sense the Saints may be said to be Heirs of the world: for indeed the right especially belongs to them (I do not say but ungodly men have right by guile, he giveth the Earth to the Children of men) but not by inheritance (as the Saints have) as Servants have a right to their meat, and drink, and what is given them: but the Children have a right by inheritance, so the Saints have a right to this world as well as to Heaven, and there is a time coming when they will be possessed with their inheritance. Then the Text will be true literally.

And thus you have had the Reasons given you of this Phrase; and this may suffice for the opening of the Point. That it is the *World* that God was reconciling himself unto.



CHAP. 36

Use. 1. *Seeing God hath excepted none from Mercy, let none except themselves.*

BY way of Application now ; and that very briefly, only two particulars.

First, Seeing God propoundeth Reconciliation thus in such general, and large tearmes to the world. Then, if God have not excepted any, let none except themselves. Art thou a man that livest here in the world ? there need be no further qualification for the tender of Grace, for the offer of the gospel to thee, but this ; that thou livest in the world ; God doth not cal for such qualifications as these ; That they must be such, and such men, of such and such ranks and dignities, or men of such parts ; or that they must be such as have not committed such, and such sins ; Or that they must be first terrified, and so, and so humbled ; No ; we have Commission to preach the Gospel to every one that hath no other qualification than this, but that he lives in the world. Indeed if thou wert gone out of the world ; although thou should'st have but one sinful thought to answer for, we could not preach the Gospel to thee, though it were possible for an Angel to come to thy soul after it is gone out of this world, yet it could not, nor dare not preach the Gospel to thee. But while thou art in this world, we are appointed to preach the Gospel to thee, and to hold forth the tender of Grace, and mercy to thee. There is no counsel of God revealed either to Angels, or men, that hath excepted any one in the greatest Congregation of people from Reconciliation with God : and thou that hearest or readest what I now say ; thou mayest bless God, that thou art one ; bless God when thou hearest and readest this ; that there is no counsel of God
against

against thee made known, either to angels, or men whereby thou art excepted from Reconciliation; But every particular one, for ought we know in any congregation may be reconciled unto God, and have eternal life. O; Only take heed of abusing this grace of God; look to it, that you make a Good use of this grace of God: this is that which we are bound to tel you, and in the name of God, we do declare it to you; and God propounds this Gospel to us in these large rearms, that you may be left utterly without excuse if you perissh. There is none of you if you perissh can say; I was so vild a sinner, that I was afraid I should never be received by God, though I did humble my selfe, and come unto him; for God wil answer you, Were you such a vild Sinner; Did not I reveal my gospel in such genneral termes, that none might exclud himselfe? did not I say, I was reconciling my selfe to the world? And did I make any exceptions of thee in particular? Thou oughtest to have come in amongst the rest, and have ventured chy soul upon the offer of the freepels of my grace. Indeed there can be no other incouragement but this for the first work, whosoever doth beleeve at any time, he is not to beleeve because any qualification of his gives him a right to it, but upon these termes, that God hath reconciled the world to himselfe; and that he hath offered the promise of grace generally; and that he hath Said; whosoever wil come may come in, and beleeve; whosoever is a thirst may come and that word of his is my warrant; that endless Promise that God hath made, is a Sufficient encouragement; and if I can rowl my soul upon this it is that which gives me right and interest in the grace of God; and whosoever hath been saved, hath been saved upon these terms. The first worke hath been a kind of venturing work, they have ventured their soules upon this grace of God thus generally and indefinitely offered, and do you retire into your closets and do so too. You whose consciences condemn you of great, and notorious sinns, when you hear of this genneral offer; though you

do not know whether you be elected or no; trouble not your selves with such thoughts; but venture to cast your souls upon this free grace of God in Christ; with resolution to give up your selves to the service of God for the time to come. and though you have not ability in your selves; yet who knows, but upon such a work as this, Gods Spirit may come, even at that instant to enable you to do it. This is that which God requires; and if God perswade thy heart to this; it is a good signe, that mercy is intended to thee. When at every time God shall make an offer, and tender of the Gospel to thee, it doth stir up thy heart thus to conclude; wel, I will adventure my soul upon this offer; God hath not excepted me; why then should I except my selfe? God hath not cast me away why should I make my selfe a castaway? do not despair But beleeve.

CHAP. 37.

USE 2.

SEcondly: Hence then it concerns us al to look about us while we live in this world; that there may be some work of God upon our hearts while we are here; that while we live in this world, we may be reconciled unto him; for if the thrid of our life be once cut asunder, and we be noe longer in this world, but go out of it without being reconciled unto God; we are undone creatures for ever. We say of men when they are dying; alas such a one is now no man for this world; wel, they had neede then to look to themselves that the work of Reconciliation be done before, for when thou art no longer in this world, then thou art gon for ever. O, then apply thy selfe to this work whilst thou hast time, and tak hold of the means, and oppertunities which God affords unto thee while thou art a man of this world, loose it not; and know, it is a great mercy of God.

God to thee to continue thee in this world; because here thou art under the power of grace; thou art under that generall grace of God that is indefinitely tendred unto every man; under that grace which hath fallen upon as great Sinners as thou art; and therefore so long as there is life there is hope. This point I have divers times made use of; to shew, that this time of our lives, is the time of grace, and salvation; and it follows naturally, and fully from the expression in the text; therefore I shall leave it. Only let me tel you thus much, That though God expresseth this grace of Reconciliation here to the world; yet if ever thou beest actually, and indeede reconciled to God, before thou dost leave the world, God wil make thee to be a man no more of this world, and though thou art in the world, yet thou shalt not be of the world but above the world. Therefore in *john* 17. yon shall finde when Christ speaks of those that his father had given unto him, and had beleevd on him; he sayeth verse 14. and 16. I have given them thy word, and the world hath hated them, because they are *not of the World*, even as I am not of the world; I pray not that thou should'st take them out of the world, but that should'st keep them from the evil. It's true, when men have beleevd on Christ, they are in the world, and Christ doth not pray that God should take them out of the world, but preserve them in the world. It should teach us by the way, to be content to live in the world though it be a dangerous, and an evil world; for it was as dangerouse, and as evil a world wherein the disciples and Christ lived, they were in danger of death for the profession of Religion; and yet though Christ loved his disciples, he would not pray they should be taken out of the world.

You have a great many discontented people, that wil pray, that God would take them out of the world; No, saith Christ; keep them in this world. And then he saith, they are not of the world. Indeed God is recon-

cileing himself to the world ; that is, to those that are in the world, but being reconciled to them, they are no longer men of the world, though in the world ; therefore if thou beest one that God the Father and the Son hath agreed upon from all eternity to be reconciled unto him in time, thou shalt be brought to be one not of the world, even whilest thou livest in the world. Therefore you that are not only in the world, but are worldly men, and minde only the things of the world ; know that the worke of Reconciliation is not done with your Souls ; what God hath done concerning you in his eternal purpose from all eternity, we know not, but as yet the work is not done upon thy soul, thou art not reconciled unto God ; that is ; thou art not brought into such a disposition in thine own heart, as to be at peace with God ; and if ever thou shalt have any peace at all, know it must be done here in this world ; the work of Reconciliation must be done here. Thus much for that point. That God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself.



CAHP. 38.

Not imputing their trespasses; Opened And 3. Notes on the text.

NOW follows the Two other Expressions. *Not imputing their trespasses to them. And hath committed to us the word of Reconciliation.* The first ; I may finnish in a few words. *not imputeing their trespasses ;* meaning, not reckoning, not setting their sins upon their own score ; so the word is. As a man that is in debt ; we say there is so much standing upon his Head ; so much upon his score. Now, when God is said not to impute your trespasses ; the meaning is ;

your

your debt comes to be cancelled & to be reckoned the debt of another man; he sets your sins no longer upon your score, but upon the score of Christ: this is the happiness of Beleevers: that those sins of theirs that stood upon their scoor are now taken off and set upon the score of Christ. This is a blessed doctrine, and we cannot speak of this without trembling of heart; because we know how subject men are to abuse it; but the Children must have the bread given to them, though it tend to the ruine, and destruction of others. You that are sinners and go on in sin, though you see it not, you run every day upon the score, like some Gallants that come into an Inn, or into a Tavern, and there cal for Wine, and good cheer, never thinking that one is al the while they are eating, and drinking, and merry, behind the dore with a peece of Chalk scoring up al, and at last wilcal in for the payment of it. Every sin we commit is upon the score and there is a time when God wilcal for payment. You wil say, how is it then that God saith, *their sins shal not be imputed*? Why, it is because Christ comes, and al that is upon our score is taken off, and set upon his, but yet the score must be payed. So that this phraze noteth; That the Salvation of man is not from such a free pardon, as a man that is in debt should have his Creditor come, and say, I wil quit the score, I wil wipe off al, and pardon it al: No; But the way of the Salvation of man is thus; Here is a debt, and payed it must be: Only Christ the suerty comes, and he payes for some, and others are cast into the prison of Hel, where they must lie till they have pay'd the uttermost farthing; for the debt must be pay'd. And here is the Reason of the difference between Beleevers, and others. Those that are damned; al the time they live, they run upon the score, and at last God comes, and reckoneth wick them for all; and then alas they have nothing to pay. Saith God to the Devil; take him Jaylor. Death is Gods Sargant to arest him, and the

the Devil is his Jaylor, and they have him to prison, and there he must lie til he hath payed the uttermost farthing. But now Beleever's that have run upon the score: In the dayes of their youth, they were so much upon score. When they were Apprentizes; so much upon the score. Since they were married; so much upon the score. Yea, but when divine justice is ready to seize upon them, and areft them; Christ comes in, and saith he; let the man be freed, I wil pay the score for him. As if a spend-thrift should run upon the score, and when he is arefted, and ready to go to the Jayle, there comes some freind, and saith; deliver him, and I wil pay the debt. So Christ doth. So that when our sins are forgiven, they are so forgiven, as that it costs much; our deliverance costs much. And this I note from the phrae in the Original text; for there it is thus; *not reckoning, or accounting it upon the score*: I have in many sermons opened the doctrine of the pardon of sin: therefore I do not intend to dilate upon that. I wil only give some few notes from hence that are most proper to this text.

Note, 1. And the first is this. That there may be sin in the soul, and yet not imputed. Therefore there may be a righteousness imputed which is not our own, there is the same ground of both. Many of our adversaries do crie out of imputation of righteousness: say they, how can that which is none of our righteousness, be made ours? for so it is if we beleeve, the Righteousness of Christ which is none of ours is made ours, how can that be, say they? Yes, as wel as that which is our sin shal not be made our sin, if that which is our own shal not be imputed, then that which is not our own may be imputed likewise.

Note 2. Secondly: (Which is a note of marvelous Comfort) There may be a Reconciliation with God, even while there remains much sin in the Soul. It is not said thus. Reconciling the world to himself *taking away their sins*, purging out al their sins, as if

there could be no Reconciliation til al their Sins were taken away ; But he was reconciling the World to himself, *not imputing*, that is the Phrase. As if he had said. O ! you Sinners, so long as you live in the world, you wil have sin, and therfore do not think that God is not reconciled unto you, or that you are not reconciled unto God ; No, though sin be remaining in your hearts, yet God may be reconciled unto you not imputing your sins. This should be an argument to you, to labor to purge out sin as much as you can, seeing the grace of God is such ; that sin remaining in you, yet God is stil reconciling you to himself : it is not so much to think, that God should be reconciled to the Angels in Heaven that have no sin in them. O ! but God to be reconciled to his Saints upon Earth that have so much sin in them ; that is much. There are many of the people of God that cannot distinguish between the *not imputing of sin and being of sin in them* ; they think becaule they have much sin in them, the Lord wil not be reconciled to them. But know thou ; though sin be in thee, yet there may be no imputation of sin to thee, and therefore learn to distinguish between sin being in thee, and sin being not imputed to thee.

And this should be of Use to us likewise to teach us to be willing to be reconciled to others, notwithstanding there are many weakneses in them ; and though they stil continue to offend us. Be reconciled to your Servants, and reconciled to your Chiddren, and to your Neighbors ; and say not ; I could be reconciled to them if I saw them changed indeed : What meanest thou by that ? Dost thou mean that thou may'st see no more weakneses in them, or that there may never be any thing in them more that offend thee ; wilt thou stay so long ? God doth not stay so long for thee, til he bringeth thee to Heaven, and perfecteth thee ; he doth not stop his Reconciliation with thee til thou comest there, and be-
est.

est perfect ; No, *he is reconciled to thee here ; even here* whilst thou hast a nature in thee that bubbles out nothing but sin against him ; and notwithstanding the *in-being of sin in thee ; yet God can distinguish between the in-being of sin in thee, and the imputation of it.*

Note 3. We see here is the bottom of al our Reconciliation ; the non imputation of our Sins. It is no argument that God is reconciled to a man, because he lets him prosper in the world ; or because he hath been at Sea, and hath got a great deal of Riches in his Voyage ; perhaps the man blesteth himself, and he thinketh, O ! now al is wel between God and me, for he hath given me so much riches ; and he blessed me in such a Voyage : alas thou mistakest if thou thinkest that this is an argument of Reconciliation ; No, the bottom of Reconciliation, is non imputation. Hast thou an evidence to thy Soul, that God hath revealed Christ to thee, and that in his Son he hath ^{imputed} thy sin to thee ; and do'st thou build thy peace upon that ? This wil hold. Many build their peace upon this ; that their sins are not so, and so great as others are, What of that ; if it be but one sin that thou art guilty of, though it be of the least nature, yet if it be imputed to thee ; it is enough to make thy Soul and God eternally enemies. Others there are whose sins were committed a great while ago, and they have worne out the trouble of them, & now they are quiet and at peace ; But O ! let them know there is still the debt, remaining upon the score, it is not taken of. And as a man that may stay a long while before he calls for his debt, may call for it when he pleaseth, and first, or last wil do it ; So, thou hast gotten thy selfe into a kind of peace and worne out the trouble of thy conscience ; yet know, that so long as thy sins are upon the score, and are not wiped off ; God wil call for payment sooner, or latter ; therefore peace not thy self in any things in the world as the ground of thy peace, but thy being reconciled unto God in Christ he not imputing thy sins unto thee.

CHAP. 39

The Ministers Commission to Preach Reconciliation to the World.

We now pass on to the next thing. And that is the Commission for declaration of this Doctrine of Reconciliation with God in Christ, in the last words of the 19. verse. *And hath committed unto us the word of Reconciliation*: God hath committed unto us. I find the words in the Original different from that they are read in your English Bibles, the word [Committed] is, and put into us, so the words are; put in this word of Reconciliation: so if you read it word for word according to the Original Text it is thus. *And he hath put in us the word of Reconciliation*. But because this kind of reading would seem to be something harsh in our English phrase, therefore the Translators have translated it thus: *And hath committed to us*, but the Original expresses it in this manner, to shew what it is that is needful to a Minister of the Gospel, that he should have the Doctrine of Reconciliation to sink deep into his own heart, first, that so when he comes to speak to the hearts of other men, he may speak from the heart and so to the heart, the word that comes from heart (we say) goes to the heart, therefore it is of great use, that one that is a Minister of the Gospel should have the word of Reconciliation, the mysteries of the Gospel deeply rooted in his heart, that when he comes to speak to the people he may speak it not merely from his tongue and head but from his heart experimentally that his heart may be in his ministry, that so it may be more effectually to go to the heart of the people to whom he speaks, and that expression is somewhat like to this 1. Gal. 16. verse. in the 15. verse it is said

He

But

But when it pleased God who separated me from my Mothers Womb, and called me by his Grace to reveal his Son in me. To reveal his Son [in me] he doth not say to reveal his Son [to me] but [in me] so the words are: so that indeed it doth befit a Minister of the Gospel to be a profitable Minister when Jesus Christ comes to be revealed [in him] And so much for the expression [hath committed unto us] that is, put in us the word of reconciliation. As if the Apostle should say whereas the Lord hath been from all eternity plotting as it were the great work of reconciling the world unto himself, in that great mystery of godliness, doing of it in Christ, and this is the work that above all things concerns the glory of God and the good of Soules, and the Lord hath been pleased to appoint some select messengers for to carry this his name about the world, and to shew unto the world what those glorious counsels of his will hath been from all eternity concerning the Children of men, this great Doctrine of reconciling the world unto himself in Christ, is the very business that we are sent about the world for, and are as the Embassadors of Christ to come, and in his name to treat with the world about Reconciliation with God about making up their peace with God, so that here you have the work of the Ministers of the Gospel, & what great things are committed to the Ministers of the Gospel. *He hath committed unto us the ministry of Reconciliation*, that is the work, so that from hence the point is this according to the words of the text.

Doct. That the Ministry of Reconciliation with God is committed unto the Ministers of God to preach unto the World. The Ministers of God have a commission both from the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: to preach the Doctrine of Reconciliation to the people, for here we have it in the very words which follow. *We are Embassadors of Christ as if God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christs stead be you Reconciled to God, for Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is likewise in the com-*

mission

million of Gods Ministers, when they come to preach in the name of God, and that you have in *Nathan*, *9. 20.* *Thou gavest thy good spirit.* It was the Prophet that came to instruct them, it was the Spirit of God in the Prophet that did instruct them, So that the Ministers of God have their commission from the Father, from the Son, and from the Holy Spirit, to come to the people, and to reveale the great counsels of God unto them, they are sent by the whole Trinity unto the people, here is their commission, you have it clearly, But the commission is more immediately from Christ (though there is the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in it) yet it is more immediately from Christ because Christ is the great Prophet of the Church, & it is part of the propheticall office of Christ to have the great counsel of God his Father in the mystery of our Reconciliation to be opened to the people, Christ was first annointed, and then he doth as it were, annoint other officers to this great work, in *Isa. 61.* There you shall find the great Prophet, he is first annointed, The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath annointed me, To what? To Preach good tidings unto the meek, he hath sent me to bind up the broken heart, to proclaim liberty to captives, and the opening of the Prison to them that are bound, to proclaim the acceptable yeare of the Lord, and the day of Vengeance of our God, to comfort all that mourne, to appoint unto them that mourne in Sion to give unto them beauty for ashes, the Oyle of joy for mourning, the garments of praise for the spirit of heaviness, that they might be called Trees of Righteousness, the Planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified, that is in effect the same with this, the Ministry of Reconciliation, that is but a large expression of the Ministry of Reconciliation, and as you see here, it is a prophecy of Christ, that first Christ is annointed, this Christ is appointed by God the Father and the Holy Spirit, for the Spirit of God is upon me, because the Lord hath annointed me, there is the holy Spirit in it,

God the Father appoints him, he only may be said to be the appointer, and the Holy Spirit going to anoint Jesus Christ to be a preacher of the Gospel, and he being the prime, and the cheif Prophet of the Church, he doth appoint others to exercise as it were some work of his propheticall office, that is, to preach the great Doctrine of Reconciliation, hath committed unto us the Ministry of Reconciliation, & this you shal see is the commission that Christ gives in the last of *Mark*, 15. 16. verses. *And he said unto them, go ye into all the world and Preach the Gospel to every creature, be that beleiveth & is baptised shal be saved, and be that beleiveth not shal be damned, Go ye saith he, and preach to every creature, he that beleiveth and is baptised shal be saved but he, that beleiveth not shal be damned, this is the Gospel, the doctrine of Reconciliation by Christ, he doth not give them a bare commission, but he joyns his own power together to this commission, and tells them that his power doth go along with them in it* *Math.* 28. 18. *And Jesus came and speak unto them saying, All power is given unto me in Heaven and in Earth, What followes in vers, 19. Go ye therefore and teach all Nations baptising them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.* What a commission is here, what a preamble to the commissions is here? I have received all power both in Heaven and in Earth, And than he tells them, Go and teach al nations, as if Christ should say you are going about the greatest work that ever any creature hath been imployed in, in this world, for so it is certainly, The Ministry of Reconciliation is next to the work of Redemption, that Christ was employed about is the greatest work that any creature in this world was employed about, whatsoever the world thinks of it, no Angel in heaven was ever employed about a greater work then this, and therefore being of so great consequence, Christ makes this preface; *All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth, go ye therefore, as if Christ should*

should say, Be it known to you now, that the power that is given to me by the Father, shal go along with you and therefore be encouraged, but they might wel have said, who is sufficient for these great things? But be not discouraged saith Christ my power shal go along with you to assist you, to comfort you, to encourage you, it shal go along with you, to make your Ministry profitable unto them that do belong unto my election; It shal go along with you to defend you from al adversaries, The world wil be enraged against you, When you come to preach this Doctrine, But now my power shal go along with you, to defend you from them al, to strengthen you against al oppositions in the world, and to enable you to suffer whatsoever shal be brought upon you; and further saith Christ, *I am with you [Alwayes] even to the end of the world.* One would have thought that that should have been sufficient that Christ should have said I am with you to the end of the world, But there is something more in this, I am with you [*Alwayes*] even to the end of the world, (that is) I wil not be only with you, so as not wholly to leave you, but there shal be no one moment of time to the end of the world, but in it I wil be with you, I wil not only overshadow you and send my presence with you, but every moment, every day, every sermon you preach, and then, I wil be with you to the end of the world, those were dead above 1500. Yeares agoe, and yet Christ saith he wil be with them to the end of the world, that is with those that should succeed them in the Ministry of Reconciliation, This is the commission, And when they come to any house they are to begin thus, You shal say Peace be to you when they come to any place, that is the peace of God in Christ. Now this doctrine of Reconciliation is that that must be understood by preaching. We can read but very little of it, scarce one letter in all the book of the creature, we cannot come to understand it by any knowledge of our own, but it must be taught.

taught us, no, nor by the creature, But thus much may be understood by the creatures, Gods continuing to the world, and shining upon the just as well as upon the unjust, and abundance of Mercy heer doth thus declare with a loude voice, that there is some possibility for men to be reconciled unto God, there is mercy for mankind, there doth seem to be a loude voice in the goodness of God in the creature to sound out in the eares of all the world that man is in a better condition than the Devils, for certainly, if God had no intention to do good unto mankind, he would not continue so many Mercies as he doth; But now this cannot shew us what is Christ; but it may shew us thus much; that God hath a way of mercy for the Children of men, and I think in part, that text may be meant of this that we have in *Rom. 10. 18.* Where the Apostle speaks concerning the Gospel, but *I say have they not heard?* Yes verily their sound went unto all the world, have they not heard of the Gospel that is here spoken of, Hath not Israel heard the Gospel? Yes verily, their sound went into all the Earth, and their words unto the end of the world. And this text if you compare it with the *19. Psalm.* We may have cause to wonder much at the quotation of it, and there you have it a little different, as in the vers. 4. their Line (that is, the great character of the Grace of God that is written in the book of the creature, as it were in a line,) that is gone out through the earth, and hath a kind of sound in it, at least we may see it written; but hence you see in the *19. Psalm,* It is clearly spoken concerning the works of God, In the Sun, and in the Heavens, The Heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament shews his handy work. The creature hath a loude voice to call us to God by repentance, now there can be no calling of us to Repentance, but it is a voice of the Gospel, And the Apostle saith plainly in the 2 of *Rom.* That the patience of God calls us to Repentance, in verse, 4. whatsoever leads to Repentance hath something of the Gospel,

Gospel in it, Patience and goodnes, though we never come to heare of the Ministry of the Gospel, yet it is that that calls us to repentance, and it is cleare in this, because that is spoken of in the creature; the loude voice in the creature in the 19 *Psalm*. it is applied to the Gospel in *Rom. 10.* and except you understand it so, we cannot tel you that the found of the Gospel hath gon to the utmost parts of the earth. We cannot understand in the Apostles time, how the Gospel went to the utmost parts of the world, for there are many places that are not found out yet, but this kind of found of the Gospel goes throughout the earth, that by the voice of the creatures men ought to come to know thus much, that surely there is some way for God to be pacified towards sinful men, though they cannot tell which way, or what way, surely there is some way, and many of the Jewes knew no other way but this, they knew there was a Messiah to come, but what he was, or who he was, they know very little of him. Now the Devils have no such work of God towards them, nor such bounty and patience and goodnes towards them whereby they can conclude that God hath any thoughts to be reconciled to them, Though its true, they are not yet fully under the torment that they shal be, yet they are under so much torment as they are said to be reserved to the great day in chains of darknes, whereas wicked and ungodly men are preserved by the bounty and patience of God, and the cords of Gods bounty and mercy is towards them, and therefore they are not reserved in chains of darknes as the Devil and damned are; So that by the bounty of God in the creature we may gather such a conclusion, that surely God hath some way to shew mercy unto mankind, But we can never have any thoughts by any works of God in his creature, that God should send the second person in Trinity to take mans nature upon him, to die, to suffer for mans sin, to tender up satisfaction to divine Justice, and then al must be brought into this

Covenant

Covenant, & then he must be the head of the second Covenant, and they must be made Members of his body; now the Creature hath no such mystery as this, and therefore in the 3 Eph. 8. verse, saith the Apostle (speaking what his ministry was) unto me who am the least of al Saints is the grace given that I should preach amongst the gentils

the *unsearchable riches* of Christ, they are unsearchable, speaking of the riches of Christ, as they are of Christ they are unsearchable; the word is there, the Riches that are without footsteps, there is no foot steps of the riches of

τῶν ἀνεξήραστον πλῆθος, *investigabiles divitias*, not to be paced or traced out: ἀνεξήραστον of α and ἵνα. *Vestigium, qui nullis vestigiis indagari potest.* It is used also Rom. 11. 33.

Christ, if we speak of the Doctrine of Christ the Mediator as it is indeed in the Gospel there are no foot steps of them in the Creature, therefore, though there be some kind of sound in the Creature, that it is sure, that God hath some kind of way to be reconciled, but now the sound of the Gospel, this is committed to Ministers to Preach, & therefore in the 1 Cor. 1. 21. the Apostle saith, *That in the Wisdome of God, the World by Wisdome knew not God; it pleased God by the foolishness of Preaching to save them that beleeve.* (Mark) the world by Wisdome knew not God, certainly, the world did know there was a God, and that he was infinite in power and goodness; but the Text saith, they know not God, (that is) they knew not God savingly in Christ, they might know that God had some kind of way to shew mercy to sinners, but what way they knew not, and by [Wisdom] that is, by al the Wisdome that was revealed by God in the Creature, and by al the Wisdome they received from God, they knew not God by Wisdome; true there is an abundance of the Wisdome of God in the Creature, several acts are no other then several beames of Gods Wisdome shining in the Creature, and the knowledg of these acts, are no other but the

the several beames of Gods Wildome shining into mens understandings; take either of both them, and by both these it could not know God in a saving way; but by the Foolishness of preaching, that is, by the preaching that the Men of this world do account foolishness, the Lord is pleased to save those that beleeve: so that it is evident that the Ministry of Reconciliation is committed to the preachers of the Gospel.

CHAP. 40.

Why God chose Men rather than Angels to disclose the Mystery of Reconciliation for Reasons thereof.

NOW it is to be enquired after, First, why God would choose men rather, to be the dispensers of the great Mystery of Reconciliation than the Angels? God hath not committed unto them this word of Reconciliation (though it is true the Angels they do go about, and they sometimes witness to the Gospel) as you may read afterwards). But they are not chosen by way of office to the Ministry of the Gospel; that is not the office they are appointed to, so as the Ministers of the Gospel are; God hath not chosen Angels in an ordinary way to come and disperse those great and glorious things unto the Children of Men.

Objett. You wil say, had it not been better that God should have chosen the Angels to come in and preach Jesus Christ, than men? for they are poor weak Creatures, and like our selves, and now when they come to stand up and preach Jesus Christ, the great things about reconciling men to God, should we think that they know more then we our selves?

Ans. You must not think that there is no good to

be done till one comes and tells you that you never heard of him.

But you must know, that it is by virtue of the ordinance of Christ: because he hath appointed a Minister of the Gospel to come, and in such a way to preach, though the instrument be like your selves, and perhaps may not have a deeper understanding then some of you, yet you are to look upon it beyond the matter that he speaks, you are to look upon it as the ordinance of Christ, and so to expect, and look at all means whatfoever. But now the great standing ordinance in the Church of God is the Ministry of the Gospel, It is this that is committed to us to Preach, and this therefore is to be looked

upon as the way of God to salvation in those that God intends Salvation to. God hath chosen the Angels, but Men, and upon this reason, because we are not so capable of conversing with Angels as men; we are not able to stand before them; when an Angel hath formerly appeared to a gracious Servant of God he hath not been able to bear the glory of it, but to fall down, and when the Angels came in the 2 of Luke and said, *Glorie to God on high &c.* The Angels struck the Shepherds with amazement.

And in the second place, the Ministry of the Angels could not be so effectual, Angels do not so fully understand the windings & turnings of the hearts of men so as men do. A Man is more conscious to the turnings and windings of his own heart then any Angel can be, he may know his own heart more then Angels can, and by knowing his own heart he may be able to speak more fully; we do not in read the word that Angels knew the thoughts of the heart of men any further then they are some way exprest, nor the Devils. That is made to be the property of God, to be the searcher of the heart; but a Man may search his own heart in a great measure further then the Angels, and so they may the better speak into the hearts of others, and to God in Willsome rather

rather commits the Ministry of Reconciliation to men then Angels.

But a third is this, and that is a special one, that the power of God may the more appeare in the conversion of souls unto Jesus Christ; and in this one thing, the power of God doth appear a great deal more then in making Heaven, and Earth.

First, The Doctrine of Reconciliation, is the most high supernatural thing that is in the world, it is above the reach of a creature.

Secondly, It is that that doth beat down mans nature as much as can be. But now that a few poor fisher men at first, to whom was committed the word of Reconciliation, and a few of the Apostles that were in a poore meane contemptible condition, that sometimes had scarce raggs to hang upon them, were whipt up & down, & put in the stocks as if they had been the vilest Rogues that had been in all the world, and yet that God should subdue so many nations upon the face of the earth, and in time should bring the whole world in general to receive this Doctrine by such poor and weak meanes, O! the infinite power and glory of God that doth appeare. In this God uses weak meanes, to shew the greatness of his power, and for that you have a cleare text in 2 Cor. 4. 7. But we have this treasure in *Earthen Vessels*, that is the Ministry of Reconciliation. O! it is a treasure indeed in earthen vessels, the word is in the greek, in vessels of shells, there were some rich shells, that had on the outside a plaine shell, that when you came to the Sea-shore you should look upon them, and they looked meanly as if they had not been worth a farthing, but within the shell there was a precious Pearle that was worth many thousands of pounds, so saith he, we have this treasure in a shell, that is in a poor weak fraile vessel man, a contemptible vessel we have this pearle, And why so? the Apostle gives the reason, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. There

is a mighty power of God that goes together with the Ministry of Reconciliation. Whosoever any soul is brought home to be reconciled unto God, certainly there goes a mighty power, yea, there goes an hyperbolical power together with it.

Object, But how will this appeare, that there is such a mighty power of God that goes with the Ministry of Reconciliation?

It appeares in this, that there is such mighty things done by such poor weak and contemptible means that men should be willing to part with any thing in the world, yea their very lives, and beare the greatest torments of the most cruel Tyrants, and that for the witness of this truth. Now this appeares to be the mighty power of God, and this seemes to be a secret answer to any objection in 3 Cor. Is it so that the Ministers of the Gospel are far more Glorious then the Ministers of the Law? What is the reason that the Ministers of the Gospel are in such a meane condition, so much meener then the Ministers of the Law? There was an high Priest, and he had glorious Robes, and had pretious stones upon his brest and shoulders, now we have no such things, Here is a company of poor Fisher-men, weak meane men that the world regards not, suerly the Ministers of the Law were more Glorious then these Ministers of the Gospel. No saith the Apostle for al this, we have this treasure in earthen vessels that the excellency of the power of God might appeare, and not of man, and we are willing (as if the Apostle should say) that the power of God may appeare more that the glory of God may shine bright, we are willing to be Earthen Vessels.

Another Reason may be this, why God commits this Ministry to poor [Men:] rather than to Angels; surely God hath a further end then wee imagine, it is (in iust judgment) to be a stumbling block to wicked, and ungodly men, whose hearts are opposite unto the Glorious Gospel; that (as we know) Christ said he preached

preached in parables, *that in seeing they might not see, and in hearing they might not understand*; as a just judgment of God against the Pharisees, and others whose hearts were wicked, and unclean, and opposite unto Christ, that the glorious things of the Gospel might be hid under those parables. So I make no question but the means of the Ministry of the Gospel, (which the world counts Foolishness) and the mean condition of the professors of the Gospel is made by God as a stumbling block to ungodly men, who God intends should perish eternally, because their hearts are wicked and perverse, & I hate them (saith God) therefore wil hide this rich treasure from them; But those that I love, I wil open the inside unto them, but others shal have nothing but the outside, they shal only have the visible part. But now there are others whom God intends to save, and they come, and the Lord (together with their outward Ministry) speaks to their hearts, and opens the inward treasure to them, and they se the Glory of it, and admire at it, and they come to tast the sweet promises of the Gospel, and they adore God in receiving such things as these are: so that God fetches about his ends this way, but (in his just judgment) hides his Gospel from some, and reveales it to others, and therefore saith the Apostle in 2 Cor. 4. *If our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost*, the ministry of the Gospel it is hid to some, but it is to those that are lost; he hides it from them by this outward meanes, the outside; Thus you see why God doth commit the Ministry of Reconciliation unto men rather then unto Angells.

C A P. 41.

*Why God wil not himself immediatly dispute this
Gospel-Reconciliation.*

BUT further, it may be said; why wil not God immediately himself preach this Doctrine of the Gospel, The Mystery of Reconciliation? we see many infirmities in men; Men are ready enough to stumble at all infirmities of the Ministers of the Gospel (which by the way should teach Ministers of the Gospel to have a care how they walk) but because there are so many things to be excepted against men we would be ready to think, if God would himself preach the gospel from heaven men would regard it more.

No, but God wil not do so, though God wil assist the Ministry to make it effectual in the hearts of those that shal be saved; yet he wil not speak himself from Heaven, but he wil send men like themselves, and let men hear or not, and howsoever, (though men think, if God should speak himself they would hear him) yet if they heare not men, they would not hear God. God spake himself from heaven in the delivering of the Law, but men did not keep the Law; but now God wil rather speak by men; because he doth delight to make use of every creature according to the capacity of it. The Lord takes a wonderful delight in the use of almeats that is suiteable to a creature, And therefore you shal find (which is very observeable) that though God did begin to speak from Heaven to *Saul* that he did convert (who afterwards was called *Paul*) Christ spake at first from Heaven, but mark, he would not do the whol work himself immediatly; but before the work should be accomplished there should be meanes used

used in *Act. 9. 4.* There Christ speaks from Heaven ; but I beseech you observe it, what doth Christ speak from Heaven ? he doth not preach the gospel ; it is only the word of conviction *Saul, Saul, Why persecutest thou me ?* This was enough to strike Saul with astonishment so that he fell upon the earth, and said Lord, what wilt thou have me to do ? But mark, what answer is given him ? *Go into the City and it shall be told thee.* You must not think though I begin to speak from Heaven to you, but that you must be content to set upon means, and so he did with *Saul, he arose from the Earth in verse, 8.* God made him stay a good while before he would tel him what he should do ; he was three dayes and nights and eate nothing, and was praying al the while unto the Lord, and then in vers. 10. Saith the Lord to *Ananias* (a Minister of his) Go to such a place, and there thou shalt open to *Saul* my Mercy : this Doctrine of Reconciliation. It is true, I begin to think upon him ; but I will not go on in the work ; you shall do it, and he shall attend upon your Ministry to let him know, what my mercy in Christ to his Soul is, and I will bleis your Ministry unto his Soul.

And thus you see how God stands upon the making use of the meanes. I make no question but it is something like to Gods dealing with many of you ; though God at first begins himself, and strikes some terror into your hearts. A man when he is going about his business, he hath some suddaine thought dents into his heart, Lord where am I ? What if I should now die ? how can I answer for such and such things before God ? And thus perhaps he comes to be troubled in his Conscience by some immediate work of God, but he will not go on in this work immediately, but he sends him to the Ministers of his word, and there he shews him what he must do concerning his good ; I will give you a notable text to shew you how God stands upon meanes ; in *Act. 10. 2.* He

had

had some kind of the fear of God, but understood little of Christ; he was a souldier, a Centurion of the band called the Italian band; he had a greate many souldiers that were wicked, but yet he had some that were godly: But though he was in that place, yet he was a devout man and ful of prayer, (as it is commendable for Souldiers to be much in prayer,) because carrying his life in his hands, he had need carry Grace in his heart, and then in the 3. verse, (it is a very observable Scripture) first, God accepts of his prayers, and appears in a Vision to him, and sends an Angel to him, and tels him that his prayers were accepted wel, but God had revealed so much of Christ to him which he was very ignorant of.

Object. You wil say, seing God did send an Angel to him, why did not God reveal Christ by the Angel? No, he would not, he sends an Angel to *Cornelius* to this end, to bid him send for *Peter* that was a Minister of the Gospel; This should be the message of the Angels, to tel him that God regarded his prayers, and almes, I but, as if the Angel should say, God hath other things to tel you; but the truth is I have no commission to tel you, my commission is to tel you that you should send for a Minister, he sent for *Peter*, and *Peter* came and Preacht Christ unto him; as you may see in verse, 34, so that you may see that God doth use to work upon men by means, and surely, herein God wil honor humane nature in taking it upon himself, and for Gods honoring of the Minister of his word, take this one note (which is likewise very observable) that Christ himself when he Preacht upon the Earth, we never read that his preaching was so efficacious to convert so many Souls, as the Ministers of the Gospel did; *Peter* when he came to preach the Gospel, Converted three thousand Souls at one Sermon, and you never read that Christ converted so many at a Sermon, Christ himself preaching immediately the Gospel did never convert so many as *Peter* did;

did; The reason is to shew, that we must not expect so much the immediate preaching of God unto us; as God and Christ preaching to us by the Ministry of Man; that is the meaning of it: so that now you have had the point opened unto you; that God commits unto us the Ministry of Reconciliation.

I shal endeavour to apply it.



CHAP. 42.

Use, 1. The sending of the Ministers of the Gospel is to be accounted a glorious blessing.

First, If this be the great work of the Ministers that are sent amongst you to dispence the Ministry of Reconciliation to you; O! then certainly the sending of any of the ministers of the gospel among you, you are to account a glorious and a wonderful blessing of God upon you at any time; why? what is their errand? They come to treat with your souls about Reconciliation with God, and God hath appointed this the greatest means of bringing souls unto himselfe, to be reconciled unto himselfe, and therefore it is one of the greatest blessings in the world to have the ministry of the gospel in any congregation. *Blessed be your eyes saith Christ that you see such things,* and your ears that you heare such things, that God hath disposed you to live in those times wherein you have the mighty things of the ministry of the gospel shewed unto you; it is a good argument that god hath many souls to be reconciled unto when he sends the ministers of the gospel unto a place, and therefore when *Paul* was going from a place, God appeared to him in the night, and bid him be of good courage and saith unto him, *I have many souls in this City.* When God in a special manner sends the preach-

ing of the gospel into a place let them bless God from their souls, and take it as an argument that sure God hath many souls in this place that he intends to be reconciled unto, for the ministry of the gospel is the ministry of reconciliation ; it is the fruit of the prayer of Jesus Christ, and for that compare those scriptures together and it will be clear ; in *Esay. 49. 8.* this is quoted in *Cor. 2. 6. 2.* now what is that ? that is, when *Paul* was preaching to them, and he makes this the fulfilling of that prophecy in *Esay. 49.* now it is clear, that, that prophecy is a prophecy of Christs praying to God the father ; for those that did belong to his election, that in due time they might have the doctrine of reconciliation opened to them ; now saith God I have heard thee in an acceptable time, and saith *Paul*, now is the acceptable time, so that at any time when you come to heare a sermon, and hear the doctrine of Reconciliation opened to you ; you should think thus much, This morning, or this day have I had the fruit of the prayer of Jesus Christ for this congregation, and for my part in particular Christ was praying unto his father for this long before I was borne, and now do I come to have the fruit of the prayer of Jesus Christ ; This very sound of the gospel in my ears this morning, it is no other but the fruit of the prayer of Jesus Christ unto God the father long before I had a being and the world was.

*****:*****? *****

CHAP. 43.

Use, 2. The Great honor of Ministers that are Faithful.

SEcondly, Hence appears the great honor of the Ministers of the Gospel in their Ministry ; we will not attribute to our persons, but to

our

our work, certainly, if they are committed to the Ministry of reconciliation, they are sent about the most honorable business that ever was in the world; to dispence unto the Children of men the great mystery of Salvation by Jesus Christ. So if a Minister be faith free in it, it may be said of any one that God uses in this; Happy that ever he was born, and blessed be the womb that beare him and the paps that gave him suck, if so be he be faithful in this his work; for he is imployed about the greatest business that is in the world; never did God employ Angels in a work of greater consequence, and in a work wherein they are more honored they are called in scripture Angels of the Churches, for indeed their work is Evangelical, and when he speaks of them in *1 Cor. 4. 1.* *Therefore let a man account of us as of the Ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God.* Bretheren, we could be willing, that for our persons they should be never so contemptible before you if so be the contemptibleness of our persons might further the glory of our work, But we know ordinarily, that the contempt of persons hinders the honor of the work, and therefore saith the Apostle, let a man so account of us as of the Ministers of Christ, and stewards of the Mysteries of God: we are appointed stewards of the mysteries of God, we are stewards to deal out unto you the mysteries of life, and Salvation, *Joseph* was accounted highly off, when he did deale out the Corne in Egypt, and now this work of reconciliation is that that the Angells prie into, the Angels learne instruction from this mystery of reconciliation, it doth, not only beleeve the greatest men in the world to attend upon it: but the Angels themselves honor it, and learne by it. I wil give you a text for this because it may seem to be hard unto you, the text is in *Ephes. 3 verse, 10.* *To the intent, that now unto Principalities, and Powers in Heavenly places might be known by the Churches the manifold wisdom of God; that (not only men) but the*

very Angels in heaven might come to understand further the wisdom of God in Christ, made known to the Church, certainly; if the Angels come to know further by the Church, then specially at their Church meetings when they are together, and when there is the dispensation of the Ministry of the Gospel among the Saints; then when the Church is in their exercises of the ordinance of the Church; then they come to know the manifold wisdom of God (howsoever some think it is foolishness) yet God saith, it is a manifold wisdom of God and the Angels think so too. Certainly, there is no place so full of sinners, as of Angels heareing; therefore, you may wel come to heare, for the Angels they come to heare, and therefore the Apostle saith to women, that they should beleave themselves wel because of the Angels, and the scripture tells us, that the Angels prie into this mystery of the Gospel. Ministers need not seeke honor to themselves any waies, but by their faithful administration of the Gospel, and therefore in the primitive times, the Ministers of the Gospel were mightily honored of the people, let a soul come to understand what it is to have peace with God through Jesus Christ, through any Ministers, Ministry, and that soul wil honor that Ministry enough; hee needs not cal for any honor and respect from that poor soul, It is said, that in the former times there were wooden challices and golden Ministers: but afterwards there were golden cups, and wooden Ministers. It was a great deale more honor to the Church when there were golden Ministers, but afterwards when there were golden cups & ministers were gallants, and had great means, may they not wel be called wooden in respect of their opening of the mysteries of Salvation to the people? It is not now so much for to preach morallity, (these are good things to be preachon) but where is the great point of reconciliation? The great point that al Ministers ought to aim at is the great point of Reconciliation, and that is to be preachon

preach, and it is their commission to preach that especially. Oh, how is it to be received, to be accepted? To us is committed the ministry of reconciliation; what is it? It is such a ministry, of no less consequence then your reconciliation with God; Oh how gladly should you take in this ministry? for they come about a work that is worthy of al acceptance, as the Apostle saith *Tim. 1. 1. 15. This is a faithful saying, and worthy of al acceptance that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners*; This is the sum of the ministry of reconciliation, when we come to bring this unto you, we do not expect al acceptance, to open your hearts and hands to receive in this work of reconciliation into you: as we read of *Noah*, when he was tossed up and down the Sea) after many dayes he put forth a dove, and she brought in an Olive branch, Now this you know is an Embleme of peace, *Noah* opened the window of the Arke, and took in the Dove with the Olive branch, and al those that come to preach the Gospel unto you, they come with the Olive branch in their mouths, and the truth is, you are, as it were upon the Sea floating up, and down, and we come unto you: with an Olive branch in our mouthes like *Noahs* Dove, Oh, then open your windows and receive it, saith the prophet, Oh how beautiful are the feet of them that bring good tidings of peace, and as you read in *Rom. 10. 15. Their very feet should be beautiful unto you*; It is so prophesied of among the Prophets, and it is made use of in the new Testament, and if you find your hearts opened and accepting of it, and rejoyce and bless God for it, then you fulfil that prophesie, and then the feet of those messengers are beautiful in your eyes; that is the work that you should come for when you come to hear a Sermon; You should think, this day am I coming to hear somewhat of the work of reconciliation between God and my soul, and when people come to the word to expect something concerning this peace with God, and when they heare any such

such thing, Oh, then they should bless the name of God. Some come to the word to hear some witty sentences, and for discourse (though the maine thing is that you should come to hear something about the reconciliation of God to your souls, and you should watch for such a word al: the while the minister is opening the point, Oh! but when wil the word of peace be opened from God to my soul? And when you hear that word, Oh! you should embrace it, and receive it as in *Psalm* 58. *I wil hearken what the Lord wil say, for he wil speak peace unto my soul*; so should every poor afflicted conscience say, I wil hearken this day when Christ wil speak peace to my soul. The Lord by his word speak peace unto you and make that which we preach in opening the things of the Gospel to bee a powerful ministry of reconciliation unto your souls.



CHAP. 44.

I have treated about what commission is given unto the Ministers of the Gospel, and there is one great thing that I would have you observe, that we take no notice of; how the Apostle again & again speaks of this, as making account that it is one of the greatest things that concerns the world that ever was; for saith he in *v. 18. All things are of God; who hath reconciled us unto himself by Jesus Christ, & hath given unto us the Ministry of reconciliation*. But he had not enough of that, but he comes over it again to wit; that *God was in Christ reconciling the world*; that God reconciled us to himselfe by Jesus Christ, & hath given unto us the Ministry of reconciliation that is in the *18. v.* that is; God is reconciling himself unto the world in Jesus Christ, again the same is in the *19. verse, And hath Committed unto us the word of reconciliation*, shewing, that it is a matter of great consequence; it is a great trust that is committed to the Ministers

sters of the Gospel, the word of Reconciliation ; and there I shewed you, how you were (therefore) to enertain the Ministers of the Gospel ; beautiful should the Feet be of those that bring glad tidings &c. That comes from God with this Commission, this Doctrine of Reconciliation in their mouths as *Noah* put forth his hand and took in the Dove with the Olive branch : So when a Minister comes with this Olive leafe in his Mouth, the Ministry of Reconciliation, you must open your hearts, and take it in. A word or two more about this, This (you have heard at large) is the great work of the ministers of the Gospel ; to bring unto you the Doctrine of Reconciliation ; howsoever it may be foolishness before the world, yet it is the great Ordinance whereby God wil bring men to be reconciled unto himself ; those that he hath a purpose to save. Here is now a work, to treat with you about reconciling your Souls to God ; to open to you the Counsels of God about bringing you to be at peace with him.

Use. 1. See what a wicked wretched world this is, that cannot bear the Ministers of the Gospel.

Hence then see, what a wicked and wretched world is this, that cannot bear the Ministers of the Gospel ? When this is al the work that they come about ; this errand unto them in the name of God, to treat with them only to make peace between God and their Souls ; here is al the Errand, and yet the world cannot bear this. If they came as the Messengers of Gods wrath against them, then indeed the world might look sourly upon them, and seek to avoid them ; but when they come about no other Errand, but meerly to treat with their Souls about terms of peace that the world should not receive them, but reject the Gospel, and despise it, and look upon the Ministers of the Gospel as if they were their greatest enemies. This is a most wretched wicked

wicked world, and there is nothing in the world that can aggravate the sins of men more than this; that they should reject the Ministry of the Gospel. Saith God, What? when I shall send the Ministers of the Gospel, my servants to treat with these wretched Creatures about making peace between me and them, and they shall reject this; certainly God expects that wheresoever he sends the Ministry of the Gospel, generally all people should admire at the grace of God, that is made known to them in Christ, and they should all come in and even cry to God; Lord, What is it thou dost require? what? Is there any Messenger from Heaven come? Now let us give up our hearts as a blank paper; let God write in them whatsoever he pleases; he doth not expect that men should rise in a rage against the word, and cast it off as that that brings trouble upon them; how infinitely are men mistaken in this? to think that the preaching of the Gospel is a trouble to the world, to whom it is the greatest happiness that can be in this world. And if you knew it, you would bless God for it; even with your faces groveling upon the ground, that such a commission was given to your brethren to come from God; to treat in his name about termes of Reconciliation with you, the Sons of men, What hurt is it the Ministers of the Gospel do unto men? that they should be so troubled with them? as to say, that the Town or place is troubled and we could never be at quiet, since there was such and such preaching, were there not infinite mallice; it could never enter into the hearts of men such a conceit as this is.

You speak about treating of peace with God; but they are severe, and denounce the Judgments of God against us.

I appeal to you how doe wee denounce them? do we denounce them absolute? or only in order to the bringing of the souls to faith and repentance? what do wee plead against? It is but against your sin that is your enemy,
your

your deadly enemy; that would certainly undo you; that would destroy you eternally. *Ahab* speaks of the prophet, *hee never speaks good unto me*; and yet saith *Ahab*, *have I found thee O mine enemy*? he looks upon the prophet as an enemy; so, wicked carnal hearts, (though we come to open the mysteries of the gospel to them; yet when we shew them upon what termes it runnes) they think we do not speak good unto them. Certainly (whatsoever your thoughts are) we are enemies to nothing but your sins, that would destroy you; that is your enemy, and would any one think it hard, to have his deadly enemy to be hardly dealt withal? Al that we desire, is; but to break the league between your souls and Sin, that there may bee a league between God and your souls: certainly love of sin, and peace with God they cannot stand together at the same time; it cannot possibly be that there should be a league between sin and your soules, and yet a league between God and your soules; now which of the two do you thinke is the best, and who is your greatest friend? either he that seeks to maintain a league with sin or to break it that you may have a league between God, and your souls? this is the intension of the gospel.

But you will say, if this be the commission of the ministers, that God hath put into them the word of Reconciliation; why do they preach the law so much as they do? why do they preach terror so much? for this is their commission; the word of Reconciliation.

To that I answer, certainly he is a minister that knows not his commission that preaches the law, or any terror any other way, but in order to this word of Reconciliation, any other way but to make you to understand this word of Reconciliation, (though there be (in some respects) a great deale of difference betweene the law and the gospel) yet most people thinke it greater than it is, for the substance of the law, (is that that is implied (at least) in the gospel [implied] as thus) when we say [the

word of Reconciliation; it is impossible to open this unto you without shewing you something that the law tends to, [Reconciliation] why? Because that wee are enemies to God, Enemies to God? How then can we be enemies to God? yea by your sins.

How shall we know that sin doth bring enmity between God and us?

The Law tells you, *curst be every one that abides not in every thing that is written in the booke of the law to do it.* When we speake of Reconciliation there is implied enmity. I appeal to any of you (considering that God works with creatures according to the nature of creatures, he doth use to worke (though above reason) yet in a rational way; he begins the work with those whom he intends to save. therefore how can wee (in a rational way) tel what Reconciliation is; until we understand what an enmity sin hath made between God, and our souls. Is it possible to understand the sweetness of peace with God until we understand the danger of our estates that that we speake of the law, it is that? that is implied in the gospel, and that the revealing of the gospel may come with a more sweetness, and fulness into your hearts; O! that you would but carry this along with you ever when you hear any of the ministers speak any thing to you that hath any terror in it; do but persuade your souls of this, O! but this is in order to my peace with God; in order to know what a blessed and sweet savior Jesus Christ is.

But others will say, the word of peace is committed unto you, why do you speak of war then?

I answer but in a word, when we speak of you concerning war, what is our aime? what doth it tend to? But only this, that you may be willing to venture your selves, your lives and estates to maintain among you this word of Reconciliation, here is the end, were it not for this, we could quickly hold

hold our mouths, we should not hazard our selves so as we do to speake to you of such an argument; we see apparently, and any man (whose eyes are but half open) may see that if we be sluggish, and cowardly now, farewell the word of Reconciliation, the word of the Gospel is gone, we must not expect that that must be amongst us, and the posterity that is coming after. It may be some of you may know, that since God hath called a Parliament, and blessed it, as he hath done, never waether word of Reconciliation opened so clearly as it hath been: there hath been some kinde of preaching before with a deal of mixtures: but for that cleare way of Reconciliation, your consciences may tel you that is hath not been so clearly opened.

Obj. But you will say, the Apostles they had the word of Reconciliation, and preached it to the people; but they did not preach to the people that they should maintain it by force of armes. But they taught people to suffer, and to lay downe their lives, and not to take the sword into their hands.

Ans. This hath been answered again and again, and it is a most vain objection of the people. This objection seemes to be strengthned partly from the thing it selfe: They say, religion should not be maintained by the sword, and secondly, the example of the primitive times.

First for religion, know, that the maintenance that is now by the sword in this cause, it is not meerey for religion, but it is for our civil right, that we have to our religion. And this answer will answer both.

For the Objection, that Religion should not be maintained by the sword, and that of the primitive times, I say, [the maintenance now of Religion] it is not for that (only) that the sword is taken up: the sword is now taken up meerey for that, (as Religion) but for the civil right that we have to our Religion, which is the chief purpose since, the Apostles had not, nor the Christians then: but now we live in such a Country where

in we have civil right unto our Religion; as well as to our Estates; we have not only right unto the profession of our Religion, (because God gives it us out of his good will) but we have it too by vertue of a civil right; (by vertue of the Law of our common wealth) Look what right you have to your Houses, Lands, and Estates; you have the same right to your practice of Religion; This is the mercy of God towards England, rather than to other Countries; Now we take up Arms to defend our civil right, and let it be in what it will be, either to our Estates, or Houses, or Religion, or whatsoever it be, stil it is a civil right; this is that that justifies this quarrel, and this is enough to stop the Mouths of any in this point, and to answer that argument about the primitive times. But I let this pass and come unto the next verse.

CHAP. 45.

Verse 20. Opened, and Five Doctrines propounded.

VERSE 20.

Now then we are Embassadors for Christ; as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christs Stead, be you reconciled to God.

NOW we are Embassadors. Mark, what use the holy Apostle takes, saith he, God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself; not imputing their trespasses unto them, and hath committed to us this word of Reconciliation. Now then we are Embassadors. His Spirit seems to be much moved in this; What? God reconciling the world unto himself? not imputing their

their trespasses unto them. [Now then we we are Embassadors for Christ.] now then we have a great trust; now then we have a great charge; now then we are Embassadors, not from any earthly great Prince, but from Jesus Christ himself. So that in these words you have these several points of Doctrine. I might cast them into these several conclusions.

Doct.

First, That the Ministers of the Gospel are Embassadors of Christ.

Secondly, What they do in this their Embassy; It is as if God, and Christ did it; as though God did beseech you by us, so we pray you in Christs stead.

Thirdly, The Consideration of the Excellency of their Commission, and Embassy makes them wonderful careful to do what they are sent about, and very earnest in plying the work they are sent to do; Now we are Embassadors, and as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christs stead, be ye reconciled.

Fourthly, That God and Jesus Christ are exceeding willing to be reconciled unto Sinners.

And that is the Fourth thing which is indeed the principal thing in the Text that is recorded. Now as the very ground of all that is intended in the Text.

That God and Christ is exceeding willing that sinners should come in to be reconciled to him, for they do pray and beseech you.

First, That the work of the Ministry of the Gospel, is it by all the means they can, to labor to draw a people by entreating and beseeching them, and to take no way of the hearts of the people until they do get them to come in, to be reconciled unto God.

These are the five things of the 20. verse.

Now then we are **Embassadors for Christ**:

et c.

I shall briefly treat of the first three, for indeed the two later are the chief, which I have said before. To show you the willingness of God that sinners should come in and be reconciled to him, and the work of the Ministry is to draw the hearts of the people; But the other three I shall speak of by way of preface unto them.

CHAP. 46.

The Ministry of the Gospel And Embassadors of Christ Opened in six particulars.

First, That the Ministers of the Gospel are the Embassadors of Christ.

Not Embassadors for Bellal, or for Antichrist, as many Ministers have been, to plead for Antichrist, as if they were sent as Legates from Rome; and to plead for superstitious vanities, we are not Embassadors for Bellal, for sin, for wickedness, for many times you hear pleading against Godliness, and for wickedness: No, we are Embassadors for Christ, we are sent Embassadors; this is something more than messengers; thus

is a higher degree than to be a bare messenger, an Ambassador is more than a steward; in 1. Cor. 4. Therefore let a man so account of us as the Ministers of Christ, and dispensers of the mysteries of Salvation. I only will shew you a scripture for that, and a little open it, and soon pass by this point.

We have it often in scripture, this word Ambassador, In Eph. 6. 2. There you have it to the same purpose as it is here; For which I am an Ambassador, and he is in bonds. He was not used like an Ambassador, you know, [Ambassadors,] First they are such as are sent from Princes and States, to other Princes and States: It is not a private man. If any of you send a messenger about a business, he is not said to be an Ambassador; but one that comes from a Prince, or State from other countries, he is said to be an Ambassador. So the Minister of the Gospel, he is not sent to deale between man and man: but between God and man, in matters that concern the great God of Heaven, and Earth; and sent from him, though designed to it by men, yet their calling depends upon God, upon Christ, only here is the difference; when Princes, and States, send their Ambassadors; they send them to other Princes, and to other States: But now God sends Ambassadors to poor wretched, sinful men, and herein he doth honor man, that he will send a messenger from himselfe to them to be an Ambassador. When a Prince doth send a messenger to a person, you do not say, that the Prince doth send an Ambassador to them that are in prison, that he may execute when he pleases, rather an Executioner, than an Ambassador: So we might al have expected rather that there should an Executioner have been sent, but God is pleased for his elect ones to send an Ambassador. And besides Ambassadors are not sent about every civill business, but when an Ambassador is sent, it is about a publique business, a State business of some great consequence: so when you hear that God sends his Ambassadors to the world, you must

must know that it is about a great and a weighty business, above a State business, it is about that that doth concerne the very state of Heaven, the God of Heaven, it is that that concerns God himself more neerly than any thing in the world concerns him, It concerns God next unto his own beeing, and unto his Son, the neereft of any thing that is without that belongs to a God, therefore we are called Embassadors.

Thirdly, They are called Embassadors because they must look to this, that they do not the least thing but by Commission, it is as much as his life is worth to go beyond his Commission in any thing: so the ministers of the Gospel they must keep close to the Commission which they receive from Jesus Christ.

Fourthly, when he goes to any place, he doth represent the person of the King himself from whom he came, and what wrong is done to him is done to the Kings person: Let the Embassadors be never so meane: so al the Ministers of the Gospel, they come to you in the name of the King of Heaven, in the name of Jesus Christ, and there is a kind of a representation even of the person of Christ in them. And that wil appeare more fully when we come to the next point.

Fifthly, An Embassador must give an account of his Embassage; he must (according as there is occasion) send to the country from whence he comes of what business he hath done: so the Ministers of the Gospel comming as Embassadors, they are ever and anon to send to heaven to give an account how they speed in their Embassage, and when they come to declare any message to the people, they are to send to Heaven, to tel God whether it be received, or rejected, and it is a very sad thing to any people, when a minister of God shal have any just cause to send up to Heaven his complaint, and say, O Lord, thou hast sent me with a blessed Embassage, of peace and reconciliation to this people, but Lord they reject it, they wil rather have them lusts, than al that

Glory

Glory of thine in Jesus Christ; Heaven, and eternal happiness is a light thing unto them. When a Minister makes this complaint, do you not think it will be a hard thing to those that do reject it? And all faithful Ministers do this. And if he be a faithful Minister, he is solicitous about his Embassage; he looks whether it be entertained, and accordingly he gives notice to heaven, not only weekly, but dayly, how his Embassage is entertained, and at the last day he must give a full account before the Lord and Jesus Christ.

Sixty. And Lastly, it is against the Law of all nations to abuse an Ambassador though he should come upon never such a threatening message, yet you must use the Ambassador civilly; So it is against all laws of religion that can be to abuse a minister of the Gospel, though he should come with a threatening. But much more when he comes about an Embassage of peace; then they are to entertain him. It is against all sense and reason and against all religion, and those people are most prophane, and reprobate to every good work, that shall abuse an Ambassador coming from Jesus Christ unto them.

Now a little by way of application.

G H A P. 47.

Use. 1.

The Ministers of the Gospel are sent from the greatest Prince in the world, and so they are to be looked upon. Now then if the feet of those that do but bring glad tidings of peace should be beautiful; how much more the feet of the Ambassador of peace? An Ambassador, is another manner of thing than one that brings good tidings. O my bretheren do not give cause for any complaint to be made: but rather give you cause to those

Mm

that

that come amongst you to send up a comfortable account unto God, and to rel- God, Lord! thou hast been pleased to send to such a place, to preach peace to such a people, and Lord! how readily, yea how greedily do those poor souls receive this Embassage? Lord! never did any Minister come into any place where this Embassage was so entertained; Oh! they cry out for peace with thee, and above all things in the world this is the desire of their souls: that they long after is that they might have peace with their God. Oh! this would be a joyful account, if we could send up our account thus unto God, Oh! let not any that come to you as the Ambassador of Christ, be like unto those in *Isay* 33. 7. The text saith, (it is spoke of I confess in another case) but we may apply it here; truly there is cause in many Congregations, that the Ambassador of peace should weep, and that bitterly, the Lord keep you from giving any such occasions; (though it would be sad to their hearts) yet it would be more grievous to you. Thus much from the Metaphor.

***** CHAPTER 48 *****

The second Doctrine, (Propounded in the 45. Chapter) prosecuted.

. I .

Doct. 2. That a Minister of the Gospel when he comes, is an Ambassador; he comes in Christs stead, and what he shal deliver (according to his Commission,) is to be looked at as if God; and as if Jesus Christ did preach unto you.

For

For want of the right knowledge of this point it is that there are so many sermons lost. If people had but this text in their hearts, and looked upon al the faithful Ministers of the Gospel as if God and Jesus Christ were present speaking; how much good would be done? When God doth intend good to any Soul he wil cause it to look upon the preaching of the Gospel, as the very voice of God and Jesus Christ to the Soul. Though many a poor creature that (perhaps) hath heard a thousand Sermons, looked upon preaching as what a man would say) but at length when the time of love came, he saw an authority, and majesty of God himself, and of Jesus Christ in the Ministry, and did feel God speaking to his heart and then it did prevail; that is plain in the text. *As though God did baseech you by us*, that; that we do, it is as if God did it; and do we pray you? It is in Christs stead. Now this is not only the Ministers of the Gospel since Christs time: but formerly what was done. Those that were sent by God to be his Messengers, it was as if God and Christ did it. You have that prooffe of it in the 1 Peter, the 3. Chap. 18, 19. vers. *For Christ also hath once suffered for sin, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to Death in the Flesh, but quickned by the spirit, by which also he went and preached to the spirits which are in Prison.* That is vainly made use of by some, to prove that Christs Soul did descend into Hell, to go and preach to the damned in Hell, but certainly that is a vain conceit, if you observe the text, you shal find that this is the meaning of it, observe the 20. verse, *It was to those spirits which sometimes were disobedient, when once the long suffering of God, waited in the daies of Noah.* Those Spirits that did live in the daies of Noah, and Noahs preaching unto them; Now (saith the text) they are in prison, Jesus Christ went & preached to the spirits that were disobedient in the times of Noah, that now are in pryson. How did he go but by his Spirit? by his

Servant Noah, [by Noah] The preaching of Noah was the preaching of Christ. As if he should say, There is such a Congregation as in any a year ago had a faithful Minister; Christ was preaching to many years to those Souls that are now in Prison: now alas they are gone, they are in Hell: but there was a time that Christ was preaching to them. I see I must not Name many texts. I will give you one text or two more; in the 1 Thess. 2. 13. *You did not receive it as the word of man; you looked beyond man: But how did you receive it? from God; and therefore it doth effectually work; that makes the effectual working upon the heart: when the people receive the word as the word of God. And the* 4 Gal. 14. Mark how the Galatians received the Apostle, saith he there, *And my temptation which was in my flesh you despised not, nor rejected: but received me as an Angel of God; even as Christ Jesus.* Here he speaks in way of commendation of the Galatians, you receive me as an Angel of God, even as Jesus Christ, as if you had received Christ Jesus; and mark, the Apostle was in a poor mean condition in respect of his outward estate. [My temptation that was in my flesh.] In my outward man I was very low; and this might have been a temptation to you not to have caused you to have rejected me when I spake. Oh! this hath been a temptation to many men because the preacher is an Earthen Vessel, though he hath brought the right treasure of the Gospel, yet this hath been a temptation. But saith he, it was not so with you, you received me, though poor, weak, a mean man that had scarce bread to eat; yet you received me as an Angel of God, yea beyond that: as Christ Jesus himself. But yet you shall observe in the next words, that it seems their hearts began to be drawn aside; in the 15. vers. There was a time when I came first amongst you, when you were ready to have plucked out your very eyes for me, and you cryed out; O! this blessed doctrine of the gospel that we now hear! but where is the blessedness? It seems that some false teachers had come,

and invigled them, and had taken them off from the
 Apostle. Oh! Where is the blessedness you spake of?
 as if that were now gone: but that is the Duty of people,
 and then, and only then it is like that the Ministry of the
 word can do any great good: When the people look
 upon it as if God spake, and Jesus Christ spake unto
 them. I will only conclude with this one thing; what
 till you do come to apprehend this, it is not like that ever
 any great good, to any purpose will be done; Its like it
 will be with you, as it was with Samuel; you know God
 called to Samuel; Samuel, Samuel said God, he runs to
 Ely; saith he, my Son, I did not call thee, well, he went
 again and slept and God calls again; He did not know it
 was Gods voice; he runs to Ely again: but then the
 text saith, that Ely perceived that God called the Child,
 & Ely gave him this instruction that if he called again, he
 should say, Lord speak for thy servant heareth. And then
 he went and slept again, and the Lord came, and called to
 him, and then he said, speak Lord thy servant heareth:
 And then God opened his heart unto him. Oh! God
 called the first time, and he thought it had been Ely, and
 looked no further. God said no more to him but left
 him, and so again, the second time: But when he came
 to understand that it was Gods voice, then you shall ob-
 serve; that God opened himself wonderfully to him,
 and shewed him [then] his minde to the full. So just
 thus it is with people, they come [now] to hear the
 Ministry of the word; they hear a sound in their ears,
 and what they hear is very good: but they look only at a
 man; the man speak, and they may perhaps commend the
 man, and commend his Sermon, & all this while God speaks
 not to their hearts. And then they will go the second
 time, and it is true, God doth speak to them: but they
 do not know it is Gods Voice, and because they do not
 know it is Gods voice, God doth not make known him-
 self unto them: But when the time of Gods Love comes,
 this is the great Embassage that is sent to the Children of
 men, And when he pleads with you, you should think
 that

that it is Christ that is pleading with you; when he is opening of any Scripture to you, you should think that it is Christ that is pleading with you; when he is opening of any Scripture to you, you should think that Jesus Christ is opening that Scripture to you, and when you com with such a heart, then God opens al his mind to you. I appeal to you whether it hath not been just thus; the dealings of God with you as it it was with Samuel; you have come once and again to a sermon, but have looked no further then Ely; to the minister: but when you have come to the word with the disposition, and said *Lord speak for thy servant bears*, Lord reveal what thou wilt; Ife it is thine one ordinance, and the minister, (though he be but a poor weak man) yet he comes and stands in thy stead, and speaks in thy name, and I say, when you come thus you shal find more in one sermon let out to you, then in a thousand before, and here is the ground that many have lived thirty or forty years under a powerful ministry and it hath founded in their eares, but they never have heard the mind of God savingly revealed unto them. Because they never have fallen down, and said, *lord speak for thy servant bears* O! do this, and thou shalt hear the great messuage from God: then you shal have God opening himselfe unto you to the full.



CHAP. 49.

The Second Doctrin (propounded in the 45. chapter) further prosecuted.

I Have made some entrance into this second point.

I Doct. That God and Christ doth speak in the ministers of his word. What the ministers of God do (according to their rule and Word) it is to be looked up-
on

on as if God and Christ did it. This is Cleere in the text. As though God did beseech you, we pray you in Christs freed (saith the Apostle).

For this I gave you divers scriptures; & I might ad many more, & thought to have added some more cleer scriptures to shew you that what the ministers do, it is as if God & Christ did it, I might name forty places that are cleer in this point but shal not that I may proceed. What the minister; of God speak according to the ruls (I say) it is as if God and Christ spake, and it must needs be sure, if we consider of the power that there is of Christ in the ministry: we have had experience of it, that there is such a power of the ministry of the word that it could not be but only by the speaking of God, God and Christ in it: the which hath power to inlighten, to awaken conscience, to terrifie the conscience, to humble, to bring down the stoutest proud heart in the world, yea, and to convert soules, in *John. 3. 25.* the text saith of the word of the son of God that brings life, *Verily I say unto you, that the houre is coming, and now is when the dead shal hear the voice of the son of God and they that hear shal live.* certainly this is spoken not only of the voice of the son of God at the general resurrection, but (saith he) it is now, the power is coming, and now is when the dead shal hear the voice of the son of God and they that hear shal live. It was at the time, and is continually, in the ministry of the word; There is the voice of the son of God that makes the dead to hear and to live.

And further the word of the Ministry, must be looked upon as Gods in this regard; because otherwise there could not be any ground or bottom for faith by any thing that is delivered in the Ministry of the word. Now we know that the ministry of the word is the special ordinance that is appointed for the begetting of faith. *faith comes by hearing, & hearing by the word preached.* It doth not come so much by reading; no, not by reading of the book of God; by reading of the scripture: but by hearing.

hearing, and hearing the word preached. Now then you will say, indeed. The word in the Bible, that is the word of God; God speaks there, and Christ speaks, and we may bottom our faith upon what we read there, but we must have something to bottom our faith upon when we hear it preached by man, as well as when we read it, and it is clear by scripture; that God doth rather work by the hearing of it preached, than by the reading of it. Except we look upon it as the word of God and Christ, we have nothing to bottom our Faith upon, (for nothing that is humane can be the bottom, and ground of any ones faith.) It is not, what is the judgment of such a man, though he be never so learned, never so holy a man) that can bottom or ground my faith. But when I come to hear him, (so as I can hear God, and Christ speaking in him) then have I something to ground my faith upon what he saith, therefore, here is the reason why so many go away, and are only taken at the present hearing, but their hearts are not grounded, and bottomed in the truth, because they hear man only, and do not heare God: But when people can say as those men that came forth from Samaria to the woman, in John 4 about the middle of the Chap. sayd, that when the woman came and told them, *Here is a man that hath told me all that ever I did; is not he Christ?* And they went out to him: But at length say they to her, (when they had spoken to him) *Now we do beleve; (not because thou hast told us, but because we have heard him our selves.)* So may many a soul say, I have been often hearing of sermons, and I have been taken with the preaching of such a man, and I did beleve what he said, and it went into my heart in some measure: Oh! but now saith a soul, I do not beleve because he tells me this, but I have heard in his preaching, God and Christ himself, it hath not been he; but it hath been Jesus Christ that hath spoken to my heart. There could be no grounding of our faith (except that which is delivered

in the Ministry of the word) be looked upon as God and Christ speaking in them.

Object. You will say, must we bleeve every thing that the Preacher speaks, as if God and Christ spake it? men may err.

Therefore you must compare what you hear with what you read, and as those noble men of Berea did search the Scripture to see what Paul himself preached; they were not to take Pauls preaching, but to compare it with other Scriptures; and they were commended for it, and God forbid that we should think it much that people should examine any thing we speak. *Try all things, and then keep that which is good*; search the Scriptures, and compare what is delivered by Scripture, and then so far as that is according to the rule of Scripture that is spoken, (though it be not directly the words of the Scripture, yet when it is spoken in the name of God according to Scripture) it should be received as if God and Christ spoke it. We challenge no such infallibility as the Papists lay the Pope hath: but we give unto all people liberty to examine our Doctrine by Scripture, and then God expects, and Christ expects that it should be received as if God and Christ spake.



CHAP. 59.

Use 1. Answering the Objections of the Arminians. And the Wantons of our Age.

NOW then briefly, Hence we have a Use of instruction, where we have an answer to the Objection both of the Arminians, & of our late Wantons; Arminians they make this Objection; when we preach: (sometimes) that all men naturally are dead in sins and trespasses, and there is no free wil in man, but man is as void of Grace

as the dead Carcass that lies in the grave is void of natural life; Now they say, If men be so dead in sins, Why do you preach to them? Were it not a vain thing to go and preach in the Church-yard? Would they regard what you say? you preach that al are dead, and that there is no life at al in men to do any good, Why do you speak to them? This point answers that Objection.

Though it is a truth that al men naturally are dead in sins, and are before the Lord as a dead Carrion; there is no dead Carrion more loathsome in the eyes of us, than every natural Soul is in the Eyes of God: but yet we come and preach to them. Why? because that in our preaching, it is God; God and Christ speaks, though our voices have no power to raise from the dead: yet the voice of God hath power to raise from the dead. If Christ wil speak to one that is dead, he shal come forth; as you know in the 11. of *John*. when Christ came to *Lazarus*, saith Christ, *I say to thee Lazarus arise*. It were a vain thing for any of us to go to the grave, and say, arise: but if Christ come he can raise them presently: So we preach to a congregation that are mixt; some that have lain in the grave of sin forty years perhaps together, yet when we speak in the name of Christ, and Christ speaks together with us, we may speak to dead Souls: for together with the word that is spoken there doth go a power and a life, for it is the word of God (and not the word of man) that breaths forth life.

And again, it is an answer to the Objection of our late Wantons, they cry out against Ministers calling to men for duties, and account them dury-mongers: Say they, What do you cal to men to do? you tel them that they must do thus, and thus, and they must perform duties, and humble themselves. They think they have got a great Objection in this; that because men have no power naturally: therefore it is a vain thing to cal upon them to perform duties.

This answers them; We cal upon them, so as the voice

of

of Christ; though they have no power themselves, yet we cal upon them to set upon such duties; we cal upon them to beleeve, and to repent. They say it is in vain to cal upon them to beleeve, and repent: But that way that God hath to work Faith, & Repentance in the heart of man; it is, to conveigh a power through his own voice in the ministry of his word; and therefore we speak to them to beleeve & repent, as if they had power: because we know that those which belong unto Gods election, the Lord wil conveigh power to them through this word of his. It is not our voice, but it is the voice of God, and of Jesus Christ. We would have you to carry this meditation along with you, at any time when we speak unto you, and exhort you that you would come in, & repent, and beleeve; Carry this meditation with you, and then you shal understand us aright. We would not have you to think, that we conceive, you have power to beleeve, and repent because we cal upon you: but this we expect; that, while we are speaking to you that God & Christ wil speak to your hearts: so that there wil be power conveighed through that word of ours, and though it be not conveighed this Sermon, yet it may be the next, or the next, and hoping in the end that wil give repentance unto life.



CHAP. 51.

Use. 2. *Ministers ought to speak as the Oracles of God. The manner of their preaching Opened.*

THe next use that arises from hence is that the Apostle Peter makes in 1 Pet. 4. 11. If any man speak, let him speak as the Oracles of God, mark it, here is an exhortation to those that have to deal in the ministry of the word, that they must (when they speak the word) speak it as the Oracles of God; so that, that

is delivered in the word; you see it to be as the Oracles of God, whatsoever a minister speaks (according to scripture) it is to be looked upon as the oracles of God. Now therefore if this be so, that the word that is spoken (according to the rule,) is the Oracles of God. then it is the duty of al that do speak the word of God to speak it in such a manner, as it may appear to be the Oracles of God. I have not now to speak to many ministers, and therefore I shal not enlarge my self in this as I should have done. Oh! with what a reverance should ministers speak, for they come to speak as in Christ stead^s and therefore they should speak in such a manner as becomes the voice of God, and of Jesus Christ; as the Oracles of God, and not think to speak according to their own fancies, and their own humors, and in their own waies: but to speak as those that are sent in Gods place, to speak to the people as if Christ were speaking to them: and therefore to consider they are in the place of Christ, so to speak with all authority as from Christ, as in *Math.* 7. verse, the last, It is said of Christ, *That he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes;* for a minister of God, he is to preach in Christs stead (for so the Apostle saith) therefore he is to labor what he can to expresse the very authority of Jesus Christ in his Ministry, and there is a ministry that doth carry authority with it in the very consciences of men, I have known of some that have come proudly into a Congregation to scorne at the word; Prophane Russians that have come on purpose to outface the Ministry, and to outface the word, and yet they have met with that authority in the word, that their hearts have been danted, and they have fallen under the power of the word, and there is a great deal of difference in the manner and way of preaching the word; some have authority, and others have no authority at al in it. [That kind of preaching that is to please the humors of men.] you, shal have some kind of preachers to dandle mens fancies (as it were;) that have

have some fine quaint words, that their sentences shall be very smooth, and (as they say) come off bravely, and this is a dainty preacher, and he shall have many delicate sentences, and witty speeches, and come into a pulpit and acts as if he were to act a part upon the stage: these are the fine quaint preachers, the Court preachers (as they call them). But this is not to preach as in Christs stead. It is very like that this was the preaching of the Scribes and Pharisees. But when Christ came to speak, he spake as one that God had authority, and not as the Scribes. There was a great deal of difference between his preaching, and that of the Scribes, he came with the authority of God, he came to preach to the consciences of men, and not to the fancies of men, and the difference, as there was in him, so there is in some measure and degree now. *There are some that preach (to this very day) as the scribes, but there are others that preach as Christ did, that preach to the conscience, and to the hearts of people, and their words do stick in the consciences of men, though they fret, and vex, and go away in a rage; yet there is somewhat that sticks to their consciences: so that they are either forced to yield to it, or fly from it.* And here is the reason that many a man will cry out and say, I will never heare such a minister. Why? What is the reason? his corrupt heart cannot bear that ministers preaching; the word comes with power to his heart, and his guilty conscience cannot beare it, now watch but whether there be not some vile guiltiness in their spirits, that say of such men, they will never hear them any more: because their corrupt hearts cannot beare the authority of the word, that preaching that is as if God and Christ spake it, in with authority, and not with fine quaint words. To this purpose you have an expression in 1 Cor. 1. 17. [For Christ sent me] he was to go in the name of Christ, [not with wisdom of men.] Christ did never send me to preach with the wisdom of men. What a text is here! How will many men be able to answer this

one

one text: that make it their great study to get Wisdom of words? But mark the danger of this! [*Least the Cross of Christ be made of no effect.*] There is a most hiddeous wickedness in this; that a man should regard more to be commended for a fine, Witty, neat, smooth preacher, than he should have regard to the Cross of Christ to take effect, to have Christ to be honor'd. We find by experience that such preaching scarce ever stirs the Soul, seldom or never works upon the heart. It was a speech that once even a Prelate that was not the best, but one ill enough, and known to many (I suppose here,) I heard it with my own Ears, he said, *That he was convinced so farr; that when he came to present one to such a town, he asked whether there were not some in the place that desired some others? Yes said they, there are some that desire a university man to come to them, but saith he, the preaching that is there wil not humble a Soul, doth not tend to humilitation.* I heard this even from one that I know was not a freind to powerful preaching, and yet his conscience was so farr convinced from it; because the wisdom of words and learning is there shewed: but that kind of way of preaching the Gospel, it makes the Crosse of Christ to be of no effect. Your flaunting preachers, when do they convert a Soul? therefore (saith the Apostle) if we preach so as to do good, it must be such a preaching as is in the 18. vers. *It must be foolishness to (wicked) men, but to these that are saved it is the power of God; and the Wisdom of God.* wicked carnal men will say, here is no Schollership, no learning in such a Sermon. Wel, it is foolishness to them, but to them that are saved, it is the power of God to Salvation. but such a poor man sayth, I know not what they say, But I find a power in it, my Eyes were never awakened til now, my heart was never wrought upon til now, to those that are saved it is the power of God. If you find a power in it, that which wicked men call foolishness; it is a good argument that you are one that shal be saved when

when it quickens you. And again in the 19. vers. For it is written, I will destroy the Wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. At their bravery shall come to nothing, and then in the 23. vers. But we preach Christ Crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness, And then again the 2. Chap. vers. 1. And I Brethren when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech, or of (many) wisdom. You will say, it was because Paul could not; No; Paul was an admirable Scholler, a most Eloquent man, he was brought up under the feet of Gamaliel; And yet this man came not with excellency of speech, or Wisdom of words declaring to them the excellencies of God; for saith he in the 21. vers. I determined not to know any thing amongst you save Jesus Christ, and him crucified, &c. This makes the word powerful; when it comes in the evidence and demonstration of the spirit; and not with enising words of mans Wisdom, that your faith should not stand in the Wisdom of man, but in the power of God: howbeit we speak Wisdom amongst those that are perfect; There is Wisdom in preaching.

You will say, why should preachers be fool? No, God forbids, there should be the greatest Wisdom that can be, and this is no warrant for one to come into the Pulpit, and to speak extempore, we do not come to justify a raw and empty discourse, that hath nothing in it but meer words, and a noise, but hath no solidity; No, let Ministers study, and Labor to be as solid as they can, & search into the mysteries of the Gospel, & open the secrets of God, & so it will prevail with the consciences of men, & if Ministers have any parts, there is matter enough to express the parts of those that are most able, and that which requires their study; and so the Apostle would have Timothy to study, and therefore it is no justifying of those that do not study.

But we must remember we come to speak in Christ's stead; Christ certainly did not come with empty words, but

but he came to open the counsels of his Father, and he did reveal the great Mysteries of the Gospel, it was in a solid way, & so the Apostle, that which they spake was weighty and solid (though it was not with vain words and phrases as I spake before.) But this I name the Father, (not that I direct my speech so much to Ministers as to you people; seeing you hear that this is our point, that God & Christ speaks in the Ministry of the word, that therefore you should desire, and affect such a kind of Ministry wherein God speaks most, wherein Christ speaks most; wherein you can hear the voice of God, and of Christ, And I know no one argument that doth more fully evidence the difference between a carnal heart, and a gracious spiritual heart than this: What Ministry doth thy heart most savour, and relish? hereby you may know the temper of your hearts, One may know the temper of the body by knowing what food one doth most savour: so we may know the temper of the heart, by knowing what food is doth most relish; if thou dost relish frothy, foolish thy heart is according to it; but if thou dost relish and Savour a spiritual Ministry that comes in the power and authority of God and Christ, that speaks to thy heart and conscience; this is an evidence, and sign of a gracious disposition in thy heart. And the truth is; in one that is fallen (or in a great measure) from God; if there be any sparks of grace remainyng they will appear in this as in any thing; that though his heart be grown more loose than it was: yet still he cannot but acknowledg he doth find more power in such a spiritual Ministry than in another. But your carnal hearts they will savour and relish of a Ministry, that is a meer word ministry, that hath least of God and Christ; where there is but little of God and Christ in the heart, there the Ministry that hath least of God and Christ is most relished. Some Women, and some that are ignorant; if they hear a Sermon that hath a great deal of Greek, & latin in it that they cannot understand; they go away and commend his Sermon though they

they understand not any one thing of it. I have heard of an excellent story of a poor begger (in Queen *Elizabeths* time) who heard a Sermon at the Court, and heard a great many Latine Sentences, and Eloquent speeches, and the poor beggar, he follows the Minister when he was going away, and blesses God, and says, Oh! Master Doctor; Thleis God, and thank God at my heart. The Minister turns about and asks him, what the matter is? Oh! Master Doctor saies he, I hope the old Religion is coming in again.

But have not the Prelates Silenced those men that wrought most upon the heart, and conscience? If any did preach so, as that their Ministry came to be powerful; and to prevail upon the hearts and consciences of men; the Prelates would not let them stand.

*****:*****:*****

CAHP. 52.

How to know what kind of Ministry God speaks most in.

NOW you wil say, How shal I know, what kind of Ministry it is wherein God did speak most?

For the Answer to that, I appeal to your consciences; what kind of preaching do you think in your consciences there would be if Christ himself were preaching to you? How do you think that Christ himself would preach if he were here upon the Earth? That which comes neereſt to what Christ would preach; that you must favor certainly. Christ would not preach to defend superſtitious vanities; for Christ (when he came to preach) preached so, as the people many times derided him, and scorned him: One time when he had done his Sermon they carryed him to the brow of the hil of the City, and would presently have broken his Neck. Do but read that Sermon of Christ in the 5, 6, 7. *Matth.* What preachers

preachers would you think your Courtiers to be if Christ were preaching to you? that, that comes nearest to that; that Christ would preach, that you must most favor, and affect.

Secondly, That kind of preaching you think in your consciences doth most prevaile in the authority of the word, hath humbled most hearts, and converted most souls, that Christ hath set his seal unto. I appeal unto you, what kind of preaching hath humbled most souls, and done most good? Hath not some poor country preacher, that hath preached in the evidence, and demonstration of the spirit, converted more souls unto God than an hundred Bishops? so that he may be able to say, at the great day of judgment (according to his measure) as our blessed Savior said, Here am I, and those whom thou hast given me.

Thirdly, Examine of what side you be; those that be of Gods side, they know his voice; (my sheep hear my voice) but a stranger they wil not follow, take any town, and divide the people, and see how the Minister is liked, some are for, and some against him. But now look into the difference of their lives; of both these kinds of men of those that are for, and those that are against the Minister; see their different walkings; come into such a place as this, (Because they say there is a thousand ale-houses belonging to this place, of Stepny; I think there be hardly five that do favor the Ministry of the word, and all your prophane ones (generally) they speak against the Ministers. Now I appeal to your consciences, (if you were to stand before God at the day of judgment) of which side would you be? either of the side of those that are drunkards, swearers, uncleane persons, and raylers at the Ministry of the word: or of the side of those that are willing to take paines to heare the word of God, and bleis God for the Ministry of his word. Certainly, that preaching hath most of Christ in it that those that have most of the Spirit of Christ do most favour; for they know the voice of Christ, and a stranger they

will not hear; they can understand it, though wicked and ungodly ones cannot. That is the Second use.



CHAP. 53.

USE 3. *We should delight in the Word.*

A Third Use of the point is this; Is the ministry of the word such, as hath God and Christ speaking in it? Oh then! How should we delight in it? How should we bless God for it? With what greediness should we come to hear at any time? What! is not the voice of Jesus Christ sweet unto us? We have Christ wooing of us, Christ exhorting of us, and Christ comforting of us. When we come to the Word, O! with what readiness, and cheerfulness should we come to hear the voice of Christ? [If you be Godly, Christ doth delight in your voice] when you are gotten alone in your Closets, and can speak but brokenly, O then! your voice is delightful to him: Therefore the voice of Christ should be very delightful unto you. I wil give you a Text or two for proof of this; *Cant. 2. 14.* It is a speech of Christ to the Church; *O my dove! that art in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs: let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice, for sweet is thy voice and thy countenance is comly.* O! let me hear thy voice my dove; O! thou that art in the secret places of the stairs; Art thou got alone into a hole to prayer? got alone behind the dore in the secret places? (for it is spoken here of the estate of the Church in times of perfection that they dare not come together openly, (howsoever wicked men wil raile at them, and say, they get into corners to do thus and thus) but saith Christ, thou that art in the clefts of the rocks; in the secret places of the stairs, let me hear thy voice; for thy voice is sweet,

and thy countenance is comely. Again in the 4. Cant.
 11. *Thy lips drop as the hony-combe, O my Spouse!*
 When the Saints speak of Christ, or speak to Christ,
 their lips do drop before Christ as the hony-comb. Now
 what an argument is this? Shall thy lips be so sweet to
 Christ, and shall not Christs lips be as sweet to thee?
 the Ministry of the word is as if Christ did entreat thee,
 and beseech thee; O! how sweet should it be to thee
 if thou hast the Spirit of Christ? the Church of Christ
 doth answer what Christ said of her lips, and of her
 Voice, and of her Mouth: so the Church doth answer
 to Christ in the 5. Cant. mark what the Church saith of
 his Mouth, what an Echo is here, and an answer to
 prayer; saith Christ to the Church, *Thy lips (O my
 Spouse) are as the hony-comb: And thy mouth (O
 my Saviour) is most sweet.* In John. 3. 29. he saith
 there, *That the friend of the Bridegroom which stands,
 and hears the Bridegroomes voice, rejoiceth greatly.*
 If thou be the spouse of Christ, thou wilt rejoyce to hear
 the voice of the Bridegroom, and every time thou comest
 to hear a conscionable Sermon, thou dost come to hear
 the very Voyce of the Bridegroom, and thou canst not
 but rejoyce in it, O! how sweet is one word of Christ
 to a gracious heart? and the spiritual communion with
 Christ here upon earth, it is in his ordinances; we
 shall hereafter be at waite in his presence, and see his face.
 But if he would have any evidence that we shall have
 communion with him in heaven, we must Rejoyce in
 the hearing of his word.

CHAP.

CHAP. 34.

VES. 4.

If God and Christ speak in the word how, dreadful
ought it to be to the Neglectors, Disobayers,
and Contemners of the word?

IF God and Christ do speak in the ministry of his word; Then O! what a dreadful point is this to all the neglectors, disobayers, and contemners of the, ministry of the word? Thou neglectest the word; O! what dost thou do when thou neglectest the word? thou turnest thy backe upon Jesus Christ, and wilt not hear him: and therefore I suppose you know the place; *He that turns away his ear from hearing the law, his prayers shall be abominable*: what dost thou turn away thine ear from hearing the word? God professes that he wil turn away his ear from hearing thy prayers, and thy prayers shall be abominable, for thou turnest away thine eare from hearing of Christ speake to thy soul. For it is in Christ's stead (saith the Appostle.) There wil be a time when thou wouldst faine have the care of God to hear thee. As you would have God to hear you then: so do you hear him now; marke that text in the 1. Prov, 24. against those that turn away their eare from hearing God speak. *Because I have called and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at naught al my counsels, and you would have none of my reproofs*: howsoever you thought it was but the word of such and such a man: yet you have set at naught al my counsels, and you would have none of my reproofs; your hearts fretted, and vext that such a man reproved you: no, it is my reproofe, (saith God, and mark what a doom follows in the 26. vers. you shall

you shal cal (saith God) and I wil not hear. There was a time friend when I cald to you by such a sermon, and you know that I spak to your hearts, and you turnd a deaf ear to me; you shal cal your hearts out and I wil not hear you, and there wil come a time that you shal cal to Gods ministers to pray for you. What? would you have God to hear his ministers for you, and wil not you hear his ministers from God? It was a speech of *Ambrose to Theodosius* the Emperor, saith he, *wil not you hear me? seeing you desire that I should be heard for you? you desire saith he, that I should be heard for you, and therefore be you willing to beare me:* now that was the speech to *Theodosious* after he hade fallen to a great sin, comming to reprove him for his sin; what (saith he) wil not you hear me? you would be willing that I should be heard for you; therefore be you willing to hear me: so say I to al men that live in any way of sin; Hear Gods ministers now, for a day wil come, when you wil be glad that God should hear his ministers for you; O! hear us when we come in the name of God; we would not have you to heare us if we speake our owne fancies; This concerns those that neglect the word.

Now a word or two to those that disobey the word; they wil set their judgments against the judgments of the ministers, & let him say what he wil, it is but his opinion. Do you know what you say? this rebellion is against God & against Christ: as if there were this language in your hearts; Christ saith, *I wil have this done;* they lusts say they wil have this done: O! this wil be charged upon thee one day; that the voice of the diuel was more strong with thee than the voice of Christ: but specially it is to contemne the word, to set at naught Gods counsels; to go away & contemni the word. Dost thou know what thou dost? let me apply but these two scriptures to thee, thou that Despisest and Scorneest the word, that canst go to company, and there talke of what thou dost heare in a contemning manner; consider but of these two

texts; I pray, first Consider of the text out of which the Point is Raised of Gods Speaking to thee, thou dost despise, and dost thou so? Consider what the text in *Isa. 39. 23.* Saith, *when thou gettest into company, and there art warme with wine, Oh! then thou liftest up the voice, and laughest; against whom hast thou lift up thy voice? thou thinkest it is against Hezekiah;* No, it is against the Holy one of Israel; thou thinkest it is against such a man that preacheth such a day; no, it is against the Holy God, and Jesus Christ, and this is upon thy score written in Heaven; here is one that hath reproached the Holy one, and Jesus Christ, In *Luke 10. (16.)* *Hesbat heareth you, heareth me, &c.* That is true (not only of the disciples, that were there for the present upon the earth) but of all the faithful ministers to the end of the world; for Christ saith, when he sends them out, *I wil be with you to the end of the world.* They were dead more than a thousand years agoe, and Christ y^er had promised to be with them, that is, those that should succeed them; he would be with them to the end of the world. And this Text concerns every faithful minister, as well as the disciples of Christ; at that time you despise Jesus Christ, and God his Father, when you despise the ministry of his word; for the Lords sake take heed what you do; when you have to deal with the word, you have to deal with an edge tool; it is that, that wil either save you, or destroy you for ever. You that have been guilty of neglecting the word, the Lord strike and humble your hearts; and for a Cordial fortime to come I wil apply but one scripture further to you, and that is that, in *Heb. 12. 25.* What is that? that in the faithful ministry of the word, God and Christ speaks unto people. Then take this exhortation; *So that yee refuse not him that speaketh.* If they escaped not who refused him that spak on Earth, much more shal not we escape if we turne away him that speaketh from Heaven. The Ministry of the gospel,

pel, and the Ministry of the Law are compared, One speaking from Earth, the other from Heaven; though the earth is, they were both from Heaven. But now in the Ministry of the Gospel, God hath sent his own Son to you. In the latter daies, he hath spoken by his Son saith the Apostle in 1. Heb. the begining; God who at sundry times spake in times past to the Fathers by the Prophets, I hath in these last times spoken to us by his Son &c. In former times God spake by his Prophets; there was the voice of God (but it is not so clear that there was the voice of God, though it is true Christ did speak then by the prophets;) but in comparison Christ is not said to speak by them. But now in these daies, God hath spoken by his Son, and God hath reserved the Ministry of his Grace, and his eternal counsels concerning the Children of men; God hath reserved this for his Son; and not only his Son personally, but his Son in the Ministry of his word. Now you wil say, If Christ did preach (as you say he doth) there would be more power. We find that when Christ did preach that the Pharisees derided him; in the original it is, they blew their noses at him, and marke! they that were covetous they derided him, they even derided Jesus Christ himself. A worldly heart that is growen rich; that hath gotten from a low estate to a far greater; he wil deride the most excellent preaching in the world. Take heed that you do not despise the Ministry, for certainly the voice of Christ wil prevails one day. If it doth not prevails here in the word; it shal prevail one day when Christ shal say depart from me yee cursed; though thou dost not obey the present voice of Christ, yet thou shalt obey the other voice at that day. I must wind up this point with a word of Exhortation.

CHAP. 43.

How we ought to have the word.

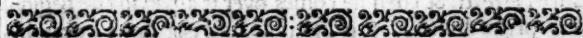
Use. 1.

SEEING God and Christ doth speak to us in the Ministry of the word: Let us come with other manner of thoughts to hear the word, than hertofore we have done. I remember I spake before that the word cannot be effectual til we come to know the voice of Christ in it; as in that of *Samuel*; I wil give you another text to shew what an admirable effect it wil work upon the hearts of men, and women; if they come to hear the preachings of the word as the voice of God and Christ: and that is in *Acts* 10. 33. You shal find there; that *Cornelius* had sent for *Peter* to come to him immediately: Therefore I sent to thee, and thou hast wel done that thou art come; Now therefore are we al here present before God to hear al things that are commanded thee of God. Here is a gracious disposition of heart in *Cornelius* a souldier, and other Souldiers, and friends that he had. Presently when *Peter* came, now saith he are we here al present before God; to hear al things that are commanded thee of God, and we al here entertaine whatsoever thou shalt reveal to us from God, as the word of God: then *Peter* (indeed) preached with a courage, and when people shal (by their behavior) with that reverence, and affection attend, as if they did attend to know something of the mind of God; this encourages a preacher, and then as soon as ever *Peter* had done his Sermon, say before he had done his Sermon; (the text saith) in verse, 44. *That while Peter yet spake these words, the holy spirit fel upon al them which heard the*

word: No marvel, they came with such a disposition of heart. We are here all of us to know, and heare what is commanded of God; (comming with such a frame of spirit.) Now, while Peter was yet speaking, the holy spirit fel on them which were to heare the word, and so it wil be with you; when you are alone before you come, say, Oh Lord! that thou wouldest speak to my heart, even so as you have it in *Isa. 2. Come let us go up to the house of the Lord.* An excellent speech for those that are comming to hear, in *Isa. 2. 2.* There is a prophesie of the times of the Gospel; there is an excellent resolution, an excellent temper of heart for people that are going to hear sermons; come ye let us go up to the mountaine of the Lord; to the house of the God of *Jacob*, and he wil teach us of his waies, and we wil walk in his paths. [We are all here to hear what God wil say to us;] when at any time there is any truth made known to you, you should receive it with such an affection. God this day hath revealed some part of his mind that I did not find to be so before, and when you hear of any sin revealed; you should bleis God, and say, the Lord hath met with my heart this day; Oh! think it not an evil, but bleis God that Christ wil think of thee; And so thou shouldest behave thy selfe. Is there an exhortation to any duty?

God and Jesus Christ hath exhorted thee this day; thou shouldest look upon it as if God and Christ hath been a perswading and exhorting thee; and is there any word of comfort and promise applied unto thee? thou shouldest look upon it as if God, and Jesus Christ had spoken a word of comfort to thy heart this day. Oh! if you would come with such a disposition as to receive all from God, and Jesus Christ, then you may expect that the Holy Spirit should fall upon you. No marvel though when people come through custom, and meerly because others come; or through some other vaine respect; that when they come, and go away, and never feel any work of the Holy Spirit. But such as come with teachable

teachable hearts, they may expect that the holy Spirit should come and fall upon them. When the very people of *Niniveh* did repent, they beleevd God, so then the stoutest and proudest heart; yea and the hardest heart in the world, if it comes to beleve God, then it wil repent. I am the willinger to be the more large in this, because this Sermon may make profitable many other Sermons, and for want of that true work of this point upon your hearts, it is that so many Sermons do so little good.



CHAP. 56.

The third Doctrine (propounded in the 45. Chapter) prosecuted, Viz. The excellency of the Gospel make the Ministers earnest in their Ministration.

THe former part of this verse treated of several Conclusions in it. A third Doctrine propounded in the 45 Chapter is,

That the consideration of the excellency of the Gospel that is committed to the Ministers of it to preach, makes them that are faithful to be very earnest in their Ministration.

Now unto us is committed the word of Reconciliation. Now then we are Embassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ stead &c. Now then upon this that the word of Reconciliation is committed to us, and we pray you in Christ stead, O! it is this that puts us on to the earnestness that you see in us.

First, that the consideration of the excellency of the Gospel that is committed to the Ministers of it, is that that should make them earnest in their ministration, and to labor with all their might to draw people to that love of the Gospel.

The same that you have heard in this Chapter, you have it again in the beginning of the next Chapter. The Apostle having the word again and again; that it is the Ministry of Reconciliation that is committed to them. After that he tels them, that he beseeches, and prays in Christs stead: & then he comes over it again in the beginning of the next Chapter, as if he had not done enough. O this Ministry of Reconciliation! it is the Garce of God unto people; O we beseech you saith the Apostle, *Do not receive this Grate of God in vain, the Apostles, & so other faithful Ministers satisfie not themselves meerly in performing a task (yet they can come & speak an hour, and speak to people such things as may please their Ears) but they look after what they do to be solicitous, and earnest for fear it should be in vain. O! then we as Embassadors &c.* And I wil shew you another Text that is very remarkable, in the 1. Col. 25. *I am made a Minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you to fulfil the word of God, and then he saith a commending of this Ministry of his in the Mystery that hath bin hid from ages, and from generations, but now is made manifest to the Saints. It may be carnal hearts look upon it as a mad and unfavory thing: But it is made manifest to the Saints; to whom God would make known, what is the riches of the glory of this Mystery amongst the Gentiles. Now then mark how our point comes in, in the 28. ver. the Apostle would gain every man; he is loth to lose any one of his Auditors; every man, every man, every man, three times in one verse, Whereunto also I labor striving according to his working which worketh in me mightily. What Phrases are here heapt one upon another? I do not make*

make the work of the ministry an idle work ; as if I went about all the day from one company to another ; from Tavern, to Tavern all the week, and then think to come and preach upon the Lords day to you, and so make it an idle business : but it is my labor, and not only so, but I strive, and how doth he strive ? (not merely according to humane strength, he strives beyond that) I labor striving according to his working ; It is the word of God I confess, and my labor, and striving, it is according to his working. Yet still this is not enough, according to his working which worketh in me, Which worketh in me mightily. The work of God that worketh in me mightily according to that I labor, &c so again writing to the *Thessalonians* in the first Epistle, 2. 2. 4. O ! this is the trust that is committed unto us ; we are allowed of God to be put in trust with the Gospel ; even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God, we are upright in that we dare not be but faithful in so great a trust which is committed to us, and then upon this he tels them in verse 8. we were willing to impart our own souls ; because this Gospel, we knew it would be so excellent. We might be very large in this ; I wil give you the ground of it in a very few words.



CHAP. 57.

Reasons of Faithful Ministers earnestness, 1, their love to God. 2, their love to Jesus Christ. 3, their love to their souls to whom they Preach. 4, a kind of love to themselves.

First, those that have committed to them the Ministry of Reconciliation, as it is of the Appostles (having it put into us) [the Ministry of Reconciliation]

Reason.

Reason. 1.

First; that that makes them so earnest, it is the love they have to God: for they know that this is the great glory of God; this that shines in the Ministry of Reconciliation in that that they go to declare to the world, & except that the Lord have his glory in that, (the truth is) he hath his glory in nothing in Comparison, and therefore that they might testify their love to God; that the God whom their Souls love, may have his glory, in that which is indeed his glory, and his Master-piece of all his works. O! this it is that makes them earnest; they thinke if the lord hath not his glory here, where shal he have his glory? O! it is infinite pittie that so great a work (wherein so much of the glory of God doth appear) that the Lord should have no glory in that work.

Reason. 2.

And again, their dear love to Jesus Christ, every faithful Minister of Christ doth bear a deer affection towards Jesus Christ, and their soules would faine that Jesus Christ might be lift up in the world: now there is nothing that lifts up Jesus Christ in the world so much as the Ministry of the Gospel, those that have any love to Christ that know what Christ hath done for them, they desire to lift up his name: and besides the honor the work puts them upon, it is the Ministry of Reconciliation, and an honorable worke it is; and therefore the Apostle Paul Rom. 15. hath a notable expression for that purpose; honor of the work, it is the Ministry of the gospel, in verse 20. the word in the Greek φιλοτιμωμεν, signifies to love the honor of it; those that understand the language it is a word that signifies to love the honor of a thing: I was ambitious to preach the gospel, (that is the phrase) and

and so it may be translated, I was *ambitious* to preach the gospel. So that Paul was not ambitious for a great living, or to be brave, or in power, or a Justice of peace, or a Lord, and the like, (as many ministers of late have been) but his ambition was to preach the gospel, looking upon that, as the greatest preferment that any of the sons of men were capable of, or that he could desire in the world.

Reason. 3.

And then again, besides, the Consideration of the Ministry of the Gospel makes them earnest in love unto their Brethren, and to the souls of the people to whom they preach: for they know that souls are utterly undone except they come to know God in Jesus Christ; except they come to have the mystery of the Gospel revealed: whatsoever excellencies they have in this world, what parts of nature they have: yet they are lost, undone, miserable creatures for ever, and better they had never been born; better they had never breathed in the air except Jesus Christ be revealed unto them. Now it is impossible for any man that knows the necessity of the Revelation of Christ: but that if the Ministry of the gospel be committed to him, he must needs be earnest and faithful in the work of the ministry.

Reason. 4.

And there may be some argument from love to themselves, those that have the Ministry of the gospel Committed to them, (some way) God gives them leave to love themselves, they cannot love themselves any way so as to be earnest in the Ministry.

First, If they be faithful in the Ministry of the Gospel, and God go along with them (as he wil if they be faithful) then Oh! how many souls should bless them

if

if at any one Sermon; if perhaps they go into a strange place and work upon a few souls, they shal hear their souls blessing God for them every time they go into Gods presence. Now what a wonderful encouragement is it for a Minister to be painful in the work of the Ministry of the Gospel. This is a greater matter than to have a Bishop prick, to have but one soul bleis God for one that God hath been pleased to work upon, and this is no other than we challenge to be our due, if we by any means may be poor instruments of God to reveal Christ to any of your souls. This is due in justice that you should ever mention us before the throne of Grace, and that the blessing of your prayers should be upon us; and this is a mighty encouragement to make them earnest (not only to make a Sermon) but to be striving to reveal the mysteries of Christ to their souls, and as they will be blessing of Christ here, so (by this meanes) those that are faithful, they should give a good account at the day of Jesus Christ, and they shal be able to behold the face of Christ when he shal appear, who is the great Bishop of their souls. He wil come with his visitations one day, and when that is come, then they shal not have encouragement that have read Service, and wore Surplices every day. But they shal be able to look upon his face with joy that have been faithful in the work of the Ministry of the Gospel, and those that they have done good unto shal be their joy, and their Crown at that day. In 2. Phil. 16. Saith the Apostle to the Philipians (amongst other exhortations) he exhorts them that they should hold forth the word, the word of life; do thus, and thus (saith he) Oh I manifest the power of the Gospel in your lives, that I may rejoyce in the day of Jesus Christ that I have not run in vain nor laboured in vain. It is an argument to prevail with people to embrace the Gospel that they may recompence those that labor amongst them with this recompence that they may have joy in the day of Jesus Christ, that they may be able to come

to Christ, and say, blessed Savior here am I, and those whom thou hast given me; here are reasons enough. I wil pass therefore bretheren from the point, only thus much.



CHAP. 5 8

Use, 1. *The horrible wickedness of those that are idle in the Ministry.*

First, you may see what an horrible wickedness it is for any that take upon them to be the Ministers of the Gospel, and yet be idle: to be an idle shepherd, to be unfaithful in this, it is a most detestable wickedness; of all men in the world those men have given up their spirits to wickedness that have the weight of the Ministry of the Gospel, to lie upon their charge, and yet they are idle. Oh! it is woful that ever that man was borne, that should take upon him such a glorious Ministry as the Ministry of the Gospel, and therein be negligent of preaching, or by a scandalous life do mischief unto others: It had been better that he had never been born, saith the Apostle. Woe to me if I preach not: So may they say, woe to us if we be negligent in it, and woe to us if we (by our scandalous lives) hinder the fruit of our own preaching, and of other mens preaching also. But we shall let that pass.

Qq

CHAP.



CHAP. 59.

Use. 2

IN the second place, labor you to inform your selves in this; when you see any faithful Minister earnest in this work of his ministration, know what the ground is (perhaps some of you wonder at it, why he cannot content himself as some others) know where the ground lies, In this; from whence it comes, it is the Ministry of the Gospel that is committed to him, and he knows it is a Glorious Ministry, and he sees much of Jesus Christ in it, and the Glory of God shines in it, and if he be faithful, and hath any love to Christ, and Saints, and their souls; it is impossible but that he must needs be earnest in it. *Paul* was so earnest that the people thought him mad, and that in this very Chapter where my text is verse 13. *You may think we are besides our selves*; well it is for your cause, and it is the love of Christ constrains us; we cannot but do that we do, as the *Apostle Peter*, saith in another place. So saith any faithful Minister (think of it what you wil,) we cannot but speak what the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ is; what it is that we have seen; and what it is that we have heard out of the Ministry of the Gospel our selves, and the love of Christ constrains us, and then in verse, 11. *knowing therefore the terror of the Lord (then much more the grace of the Lord)* we perswade men. If so be that God would but convince you of this, that when you heare any thing of the mystery of the Gospel opened to you, and any earnestness of spirit manifested in it, I say, if you were convinced that the ground, and principle of it is this; the apprehension of the glory of this ministration (as it is such in an excellent Ministry) Therefore it is that all faithful

faithful Ministers of God are so earnest in the ministration of it) It would prevaile more with your hearts to receive what is delivered in such a way. But we let that pass, and come to that which is the maine in the text.

CHAP. 60.

The fourth Doctrine (propounded in the 45. Chapter) viz. That God and Christ are exceeding willing and desirous to be reconciled to sinners.

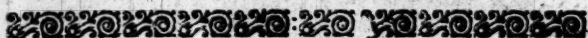
As though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christs stead, be ye reconciled unto God.

You have not in any scripture (that I know) more fully set out a more earnest desire of Jesus Christ to be reconciled unto sinners than here is; this expression is (after the manner of men) to expresse the earnestness of Gods heart in his desires to be reconciled to sinners, and that is our point of doctrine, our doctrine shall be the scope of these expressions; (not the very words) but the scope, and the ground of it. It is this.

Doct. 4. That God and Jesus Christ is exceeding willing, and very desirous to be reconciled unto sinners.

Now the thing that I am to open to you, is to shew this in the several manifestations of it, several demonstrations of the willingness, and desire that is in God and Christ to be reconciled unto sinners: and then answer a question about it, why they are not reconciled to God, if God be so willing, and the like, and then for application of it.

The next point will come in stead of the Uses. That therefore the Ministers of God, they should intreat (likewise) and beseech you, and by al means labor to draw your Souls to be reconciled unto God.



CHAP. 61.

The First Argument: Manifesting the exceeding willingness of God to be reconciled to sinners.

FOr the First, The willingness of God for Reconciliation with sinners; Why God manifests this, To begin a little low, and then to rise higher; God ministers this, first by his patience towards sinners, in that the Lord is long suffering toward sinners, he doth manifest thereby that he is willing to be reconciled: the Scripture draws an argument from thence, in *Rom. 2. 4.* as if the Apostle should say, the patience of God holds this forth unto you; that you should come in, and repent, that so you might obtain mercy from God, or otherwise it doth lead you to repentance. Except it should hold forth Gods willingness to be reconciled, it could not draw the heart to repentance; but it leads: and this hath a great deal of force to draw the heart of man to repentance, Because it holds forth the willingness of God to be reconciled unto sinners. If God were not willing to be reconciled to you, he would take you off, and there were an end of you, or at least he would exercise such patience that should not lead you to repentance: as he did with the Devils, as soon as they had sinned, he clapt his chains upon them, and reserves them in chains of darkness; there is no such patience of God towards them as to be any argument to draw them to repentance: therefore they cannot draw any encouraging conclusion from any work of Gods patience, as to bring them

them towards God again : But al sinners may do it that are the sons of men. Hath God spared thy life at such, and such a time ? know that in that work of his, he doth manifest his willingness to be reconciled unto thy Soul ; as if a man hath an enemy at an advantage, and he wil not take it : Doth nor this signifie that he is willing to be at peace with him ? And that is the first thing.

C H A P. 61.

The Second Argument : Manifesting the exceeding willingness of God and Christ to be reconciled to sinners.

SEcondly, God hath manifested himself very willing to be reconciled unto sinners in this ; that he hath made it to be the great Master-piece of al his works to provide a way for Reconciliation of thee unto him. The Lord hath wrought so wonderfully for the children of men, rather than for Angels, in sending his Son, & making of him a curse for our sins. In this the Lord proclaims a loud voice to al the world ; O ! be it known to al you sinners that I am willing to be reconciled to you. We need not name Scripture for this, for the whole Doctrine of the Gospel is ful of this ; O ! the heart of God is much in this work of Reconciliation ; al the arguments in the world, al the expressions that possible could have been, could never have held forth this, so much as meerly this proclamation that God hath sent his Son into the world to die for mans sin : this holds it forth, and proclaims it (with the loudest voice that possible can be) that God is infinitely willing to be reconciled unto sinners.

C H A P.



CHAP. 63.

The third Argument: Manifesting the exceeding willingness of God and Christ to be Reconciled to sinners.

AND then thirdly, after this work of God sending his Son, mark how God doth expresse himselfe to the Children of men ! he doth profess that there is nothing wherein he doth more glory than he doth in this ; to shew mercy to sinners: he doth make account that the chiefeest glory he hath in the world it isto shew mercy unto siners. Certainly that that his soule is so wel pleased with, & that that he accounts himself most honored by, is; when sinners shal come in unto him to repent, that he may be reconciled unto them. If a man should do thus that hath an enemy, and should manifest this to some of his friends that sit at his table, as to say, such an one is an enemy to me: but O ! how fain would I have him come in, that there might be peace between him and I, and I would count it as great an honor as ever I had in my life; would not any one say, this man were willing to be reconciled ; certainly God doth so, and therefore in *Exod. 30.* the place you know about the 6. verse, the Lord, when he was proclamping his glory that *Moses* desired, and the Lord promised, he promised *Moses* in the Latter end of the 33. Chap. *that his glory should passe by him, and he caused his glory to passe by him, as in Chap. 34 and what was that glory ? The Lord, the Lord God, merciful, and pretious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness, and mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin ; as if God should say, Moses, wouldest thou see my glory ? this is it, that I am merciful and forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin ; here is the height of my glory ; in this is my magnificence made*

made known. And another most remarkable place, we have in *Esa. 30.* *I shal make use of the beginning of the place: And therefore wil the Lord wait that he may be gracious, and therefore wil he be exalted. How wil God be exalted? That he may have mercy upon you: Therefore he wil be exalted that he may have mercy upon you; and so he goes on, For the Lord is a God of Judgment, Blessed are al they that wait for him: so that God accounts himself an exalted God, when he hath mercy upon a sinner. Surely he is very willing to be reconciled to a sinner when he counts himself an exalted God, when a sinner comes in, and beleevs in his on. Now am I exalted, saith God, this is that my soule glories in; this I account to be a happines to mee; God is exalted in shewing mercy, and that is the conclusion of this argument.*



CHAP. 64.

The fourth Argument: Manifesting the exceeding willingness of God and Christ to be reconcilled to sinners.

FOurthly, the Lord expresses this his willingness to be reconciled to sinners with a sigh, as when he expresses his desire after sinners with a sigh, which is a note of earnestness of desire, and that you have in *Deut. 5. and 24. verle: O!* that there were such a heart in them. When we express our desires we say, I would there were such a thing! But when we express our most earnest desire, then we express it with an *O! O!* that there were: so saith God, *O!* that they had such an heart; that they would fear me; and walke in my waies, and why doth God expresse this? It is that it might be wel with them, and with their children for ever: therefore *O!* that

that there were such an heart. It is observable, if you turne your eyes to the former part of the Chapter, you shal find ; that this people did say, that whatsoever God had spoken, that they would do : But the lord saw that there was not a through coming off of their hearts unto him to resigne up themselves wholly to him : and therefore the Lord doth (as it were) fetch a sigh in the earnestness of his desire; O! that there were such an heart in them. If a man that were fallen out with a nother, when he were in his Bed-chamber, or at his Table, he should fetch a sigh, and say ; O! that such an one would come in, and be Reconciled to me, how glad would I be to be Reconciled to him ? how doth my soul long after him? would not every one say that this man earnestly desires Reconciliation with that person. But thus doth God, he sits (as it were) and saith ; O! *that there were such an heart.*



CHAP. 65.

The Fifth Argument: Manifesting the exceeding willingness of God and Christ to be reconciled to sinners.

Fiftly, the Lord doth not onely expresse his desire by a sigh, but by an Oath ; he takes a solemn Oath upon it ; how willing he is that sinners should come in, &c. be reconciled unto him, and it is the greatest Oath that ever God took (it is about sinners coming in) to profess his willingness that sinners should not die: but they should come in, and be reconciled to him, and that you have in the 33. *Ezek. 11. Say to them, As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of a sinner, &c. As I live, saith the Lord God. They were pinning away in their wickedness, lying down in their sin : now*

as I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of a sinner, but rather that he should turn; and therefore turn, turn, O! turn; Why wil ye die? As if a poor sinner should lie down, and say; the Lord is provoked against me, and he wil not be reconciled to me; No, the wrath of God is out against me, & he wil revenge himself of me; the Lord looks upon a sinner lying in this manner, and he bids his servants go, and say to him; the Lord swears by his own life, and saith to this sinner; As I live, I have no pleasure in the death of a sinner, I swear by my self because I have no greater to swear by.

*****?*****

CHAP. 66.

The Sixt Argument: Manifesting the exceeding willingness of God and Christ to be reconciled to sinners.

A Nother Argument is this, wherein God doth manifest in his word that above al works that are pleasing to him, and that he would have people most to respect in this world, is the work of beleeving in his Son, and laying hold upon him, and so upon that mercy of his, that he doth offer in his Son, and that is the great work that he is more pleased withal; then al the works they do; and not doing that, it is the greatest offence whereby they can offend God, they cannot offend God more in doing any thing in the world. And this shews the willingness of God to be reconciled unto sinners, God being pleased with a sinner that doth come in to take hold of his mercy. And that you have in *John 6. 29. This is the work of God that ye beleeve on him, whom he hath sent,* (by way of excellency above all other works; (as if God should say) If you should do the most famous work that ever man did in this world, I would not delight in it; I would not care for that in

R c

comparison

comparifon of this work of comming in, and beleev-
 ing in my Son. Is there a man that fhould be the great Con-
 queror of the whole world? a man that were famous
 in al the world. Let a poor Soul, a penitent heart come
 in, and clofe with Gods grace in Iefus Chrift, and rowl
 it felf upon mercy in Chrift for Reconciliation; this
 poor Soul, (though the meanest that were poffible to be
 imagined in the whole Nation) is a more glorious
 work in Gods Eye; then the most glorious work of
 the greateft Conqueror of the earth. If thou wert able
 to rule the Sea; if thou wert able to govern al the
 world; if thou wert able to command the Heavens, it
 would not be fuch a glorious work in the Eyes of
 God as that is to come and lay hold upon his Son, as
 he is tendred in the Gospel. If you fhould give al your
 Almes to the poor, and your body to be burnt: yet
 it were nothing to the work of beleev- ing in his Son. In
John 3 God is most difpleased with not beleev- ing in his
 Son. As if God fhould fay, it's true, you are natural-
 ly enemies to me, and you have lived in waies of enmity
 againft me; O! you have provoked me al your daies;
 when you were yong, a drunken, unclean, prophane
 Youth; a Lyar, a Swearer, a Sabboth-breaker &c. but
 yet you live to hear the voice of the Gospel founding in
 your ears, and to have the offer of Iefus Chrift to your
 Souls for the pardon of your fins: Now be it known to
 you; al the Oaths that ever you fwore, al your Blaf-
 phemies, al your Drunkennefs, al your Uncleanes, al
 al your Sabboth-breaking, (put them altogether) they
 wil not provoke me fo much: as reject- ing of my Grace
 in Iefus Chrift, that I tender to you. That is the con-
 demnation of the world; al the other iniquities wil not
 fink you down fo deep in Hel as not comming to beleev-
 e in Iefus Chrift; to lay hold upon the Grace of God,
 that is tendred to you in the Gospel. Now is not God
 very willing to be reconciled, when he fhall manifeft
 himfelf thus unto finful men?



CHAP. 67.

The Seventh Argument: Manifesting the exceeding willingness of God and Christ to be reconciled to Sinners.

YET further, God manifests himself willing to be reconciled in this; that when he sees that (notwithstanding all these expressions that have been before that we have spoke of) if sinners wil not come in; God he wil seek them seeing they wil not seek to him, God seeks himself to sinners. First that is a point that you have heard before, that God is aforehand with us; God comes to us because we wil not seek to him. If a man be fallen out with another he should come and seek to him: but he wil not, because he hath such a stout heart. Wel saith he, that I may convince him that I am not such an austere man as he conceivs me to be, I wil seek to him first, and I wil not only seek to him, but I wil go to him, and beseech him, and that you have in the Text; Christ is said to come to save, and to seek that which was lost, we were all lost and we would not seek to him: but he was fain to come, yea, he came from the bosom of his Father. He came into the world, and his great Errand was to seek those that were lost, and when he had found them he beseeches them to be reconciled unto him.



CHAP. 68.

The Eight Argument: Manifesting the exceeding willingness of God to be reconciled to sinners.

Either God manifests himself willing to be reconciled in this; in the waies of his dealing with wretched sinful men; in sending his Grace to allure the hearts of sinners: the Lord sends his mercy, to spread al the beauty; and lustre thereof before the Sons of men; al the excellency, and Glory of it before the Soul; that it may entice the Soul of the sinner to come in unto him, (he doth not meerly send and seek to him) but that he might overcome the hearts of men with love and mercy; this is Gods way, to cause his mercy to stand before the Soul, and to spread the beauty, and excellency of it, that it move, and entice, and allure the hearts of men, that so God (as it were by coards of Love) might draw the hearts of poor sinful men unto him. If God did but scare men to come in to him, it were somewhat; but it is this which we have cause to bless God for; if the Lord come in never such a terrible way to force us to come in, that so there might be made up peace between God, and us, the Lord (besides that way of terror and wrath) (though sometimes he wil use that way to stop men in the course of their sins, and to force them to come in) he goes forth, and doth send his mercy, to stand before the Soul, and to spread the beauty, excellency, and glory of it before the heart of the sinner, that so it might allure the sinner to come in: so God speaks of his people in the 2 Hosea the 14. There was a great breach between Israel and God at the time, and God to make up the breach, (when he

he would be pacified towards Israel) he expresses it in this manner; Therefore behold, I will allure her, and in the 11. of Hos. 4. mark I. I draw them with the cords of a man, and with the cords of love; I delc with them in a suiteable way, becaufe that mans Nature had rather be drawn, than driven) and cannot so wel bear to be driven with violence as to be drawn by love: Therefore (saith God) I wil deal with them according to their own Nature, and in a suiteable way. I draw them with the cords of a man and with bonds of Love; here are the gracious expressions of God unto wretched sinners, to break their hearts that they may come in, and be reconciled to him: God takes away the terror of his greatness, and comes in loving, and sweet waies to draw the hearts of sinners. I appeal unto your consciences, have not you that know what it is to be reconciled unto God, had the Lord setting the riches of his Grace before your Soules? have not you seen the alluring attributes of God presented before you to gain your hearts unto himselfe?

CHAP. 6. of the 11. of Hos. 4. mark I.

The Nimb Argument: Manifesting the exceeding willingness of God to be reconciled to sinners.

A Nothcr is this; that the Lord is willing to yeild unto his creatures; (as far as may be) to yeild to the creature (I say) (as far as he can with honor) for such is the way of the Gospel in bringing sinners to God; the God hath yeilded to his creatures as far as can be conceived to be done with honor (he cannot deny himself; and his Glory) But take it thus far, that God must have his Glory; it is impossible char God should yeild further

to the creature than he hath done, Whereas God might have required satisfaction in our own persons, he hath yielded to this; I wil take it in another; this is the condition of the Covenant of Grace, from that of the Covenant of works; the covenant of works required perfect obedience in our own persons: so that if we did not obey, it required satisfaction of us. Now in the covenant of Grace there is a high consideration; (as it were) God is content to take it in a suertry; He wil be content for our parts if there be uprightness, if there be but endeavors, if there be but willingness of heart, (though he sees that we do provoke him day by day) wel saith God, (whereas I stood upon perfect obedience in the Covenant of works) now saith God, I wil be satisfied with the wil for the deed, if there be but uprightness of heart, (though there be many weakneses) yet I wil be willing, and content with that. Now doth not a man shew himself willing to be reconciled unto another, when he shal say, wether there be any terms, propounded that can be, I wil yeild to any terms so far as I can with honor? I must not dishonor my self: but so far as can be I yeild. God hath done thus; he professes to the world, that so far as he can he hath yielded to us; Now if we should not except of the termes that he requires (for they are such termes, so reasonable, so equal, that cannot be imagined less) there cannot be less required of the Creature, then is by the Creator.

Object, You say, beleeving is a great matter.

But consider it in its selfe, it is not such a great matter but only in relation unto Christ, in its own nature, it is but as a poor begger that puts forth his hand to take the almes, and it is God that gives it to us two. Now if we do any thing, what can we do less then receive, (especially when we have a hand given us by God wherewith to receive) as if a begger had an alms promised him if he would come and take it. Oh! but saith the begger I am lame, I cannot go, and my hand is withered, I can-

not

not stretch it forth. Wel, he that would give the alms
faith, he wil help the beggar thither, he wil help him
to legs to go, and he wil heal his hand and give it strength
whereby he shal put it forth to receive the alms ; only
do not strgle against me, I wil not resist me : I wil be
with you, you shal leane upon mee, I wil give you stiles.
Is not here as much consideration as can be ? and so it is
in the work of reconciliation of sinners unto God ; he
gives alms, and he gives the hand wherewith to receive
it.

CHAP. 70.

*The tenth argument : Manifesting the exceeding
willingnesse of God and Christ to be reconciled to
sinners.*

And then, the Lord manifests his willingnesse to be re-
conciled unto sinners in this ; he doth profess unto sin-
ners, that the greatest sins that ever they have committed
shal not be a hindrance to bear of this work of reconcili-
ation. The Lord I say professes this to sinners ; he
sends his messengers to tel them, that though (perhaps)
they may be conscious to themselves of some vile thing
that they have committed, whereby they may think that
God wil never pass by that sin : But God to take away
the objection that they shal never be able to say so ; he
doth make that as cleere as any thing in this world ; that
there is not the greatest sin that ever thou hast commit-
ted (except that one against the Holy Spirit) no other
sin shal barre or hinder the work of thy reconciliation :
and certainly where that sin is committed, the heart wil
never desire to come in to be reconciled to God, but flies
in the face of God to revenge himself upon God. But
if thou hast a heart that desires to come in to God, that

is an infallible argument that thou hast not committed that sin. I might give you a great many Scriptures for this, to shew that God professes that there is not any sin that shall make the bar in the way between him and thee; in Isa. 1, 18. *Come now let us reason together saith the Lord &c.* Yes, come now let us reason together. Thus God deals in a familiar way with sinners, as if a Malefactor were before the Prince shaking, quivering, and trembling, fearing that the Prince would have his life; being conscious to himself of abundance of evil that he hath been guilty of, and the Prince should go and take him by the hand, and say, *Come let us rise up; let us reason together*; though your offences be great; yet that shall not be a bar between you and me. This is that we have authority to proclaim even in the name of the Lord God of Heaven; and to every poor soul, and to the worst of sinners, and to the greatest of sinners that are here, or can be heere now, before the Lord, in his name, this we say, there is nothing past between God and you; no sin that is yet past that shall be your undoing, and the eternal destruction of your souls: But it will be some sin that is yet to come; somewhat that is yet to come will be the eternal destruction of every sinner in this Congregation. It is true, if God smite thee now it will be the sin that is past: but if God let thee live this day, it is rather for something that is yet to come, than for any thing that is past: for the continuance in the hardness of heart, and your unbelief from this time forward; rather then for what is past. If one had run in arrears, and incurred a great deal of punishment, enough to his undoing; if this should come to be said unto him; Thus far you have run: But here is a proclamation; there is nothing that is past that shall be charged upon you but look to it for the time to come: I do not say, that all the sins that are past God will never reckon, but thus, that he will never reckon with any of you for what is past, but for some cause of evil that

that you shall be guilty: of for the future; that must go along with it; and that may cause God to bring that, that is past over again: but that that will be your undoing, and destruction will be something that is to come, and if you continue in your wicked waies, then that will bring al over again. But now if you had a heart this day, at this present, to fall downe before the lord, to seeke to make up your peace with him, and to close with the grace of God in his son: I can boldly pronounce that al your sins, that are past, are done away; O! remember this, this gracious offer of God in *Esa. 1. 18.* whatsoever you have been before, yet that needs be no discouragement unto you; it is the continuance in your iniquity that wil undo you; and now wil not this soul justifie God at the great day? must not God needs be justified if any sinner in this congregation be awakened at last? I say this argument shall rise up against them, and shall justifie God against you. Now God wil say, you that lived a long time in sin, you heard that after so many years sinning, that whatsoever your sins were before, yet some things that were then to come would be your destruction, or els you should never be destroyed: and yet you would venture for the time to come; you would be bould to adde to that heape of your sins that have been so longe a making, and thereby bring al your sins upon you that you had committed before. And therefore righteous is God in the Condemnation of this sinner, (wee speak of the willingness of God to be reconcilled unto sinners) to that end that you might come in, and be reconcilled, or otherwise that the justice of God may be cleere at the great day, and this is a special end of al the manifestation of Gods goodness unto sinners; that he might cleer himselfe at the great day in those that shall perish. There are a great many things yet more behind, where in the willingness of God to be reconcilled unto sinners is further to be set forth: yet I know there are Objections that ly in your

S f

minds.

minde. How can we come? And if God be so willing, he may bring our hearts to be willing to be reconciled to him; we shal discourse these more at lardge; only for the present, I desire to present, before you this; the manifestation of the goodnes of God towards sinnersto gain upon their hearts; that they might be reconciled unto him, and I should be very fory to open al these things in such a congregation as this is, if it were not to gain some souls: (for it's like enough that some wil be hardened) and now if some should be hardened, and others should not be gained: what a miserable thing were it? I might make this as an evidence, how willing God is to be reconciled unto siners; that he would have the riches of his grace thus manifestd to gain siners to himself, though he knows that it wil be a means to harden others; he knows that it wil cost the eternal damnation of many souls, and though he do know this: yet for al this saith God, let my willingness to be reconcilled be opened unto poor sinners by the preaching of the gospel, though it costs many souls very dear; yet (for the love I bear to poor souls) let it be made known to the face of them al. Now if God were not strongly set to do good to souls, suerly he would not venture the damnation of other souls so much. But saith God, let their souls go, rather than my willingness to be Reconciled unto others, should not be declared unto them.

CHAP.

CHAP. 71.

The eleventh argument : Manifesting the exceeding willingness of God and Christ to be reconciled to sinners.

THe next argument that shewes the willingness of God to be reconciled unto sinners is this ; The Lord in his word, doth use very powerful, and strong arguments to draw the heart to come in to be reconciled ; this is that evidence ; (I say,) that the Lord is willing, by the strong reasons that God doth use in his word to gain upon the hearts of sinners, to bring them in to be reconciled, he doth not meerly offer mercy ; he doth not meerly set before the soul his mercy. But the Lord labors with strong reasons, motives, and arguments to perswade and gain the hearts of sinners unto himself ; to come in to be reconciled unto him ; as now when a man doth offer peace, it is somewhat, and when he doth it in a generous loving way of curtesie that is more : but then, when he doth send strong arguments, to perswade, & wil not readily take a denial, but sends such & such arguments, & doth consider before hand what wil be most likely to perswade the heart of such a man. What can I conceive wil gaine his heart most ? What can I think ? Suppose there should be a man, between whom & you there hath been a falling out, & you should know that when he is alone in his closter, he is thinking thus with himself ; What arguments can I conceive may take the heart of such a man to perswade him ; to come in to be at peace with me ? what can I think may be the most prevalent ? That wil I certainly use to perswade him. But undoubtedly it is so with God. God looks upon the Children of men, and doth consider what argument wil take their hearts most ; the scripture is exceeding full of prevalent, & powerful arguments, to perswade the hearts of men to come in, to be reconciled unto God : [Arguments]

Sometimes taken from the equity of Gods waies towards them, and their unequal wayes towards him; Are not my wayes equal saith God, and your wayes unequal? Is there any thing that I require of you but righteous? Do not I speak righteous? Sometimes he uses arguments from the absolute necessity that lies upon sinners to come and be reconciled unto God, shewing them that certainly they will be lost, undone, and eternally damned if they do not come in. *He that beleeveth not, the wrath of God abides upon him.* You are lost and undone creatures except you do come in. And sometimes arguments taken from the excellency of the benefit, and profit that there is in comming in to God, and being reconciled unto all the Glorious promises of the Gospel, are so many powerful arguments to draw the hearts of sinners to run in to be reconciled unto God. I might be very large in this; in shewing of the particular arguments that God doth use: but take that one full argument that we have to perswade sinners to come in, In *Prov. 1. 23. Turne you at my reproof; behold I wil pour my spirit upon you; I wil make known my word unto you: He speaks here to simple ones, Scorners, Fools; [Turne you at my reproofe; behold, I wil pour my spirit out upon you]* (saith God) as if God should say, though you are Scorners: yet the truth is; my heart works towards you, my heart doth yearn towards you, and if you would but turne to me, I would pour forth my heart to you: you shall have my very spirit, my very heart let out unto you, if you wil turne unto me. What an argument is here to prevail with the hardest hearts in the world? For God himselfe to come and say unto a sinner, to one that hath scorned him and his wayes, and to a Fool that hath gone on in waies of folly, and wickedness; for God to come and say unto him, *O wretched sinner! come in, come in, turne to me, turne to me, for my heart is full, my heart is full, turn to me, I wil pour forth my heart to thee, At those promises of*

giving

giving rest to thy soul; of giving life eternal, eternal salvation, Glory, Peace, and Comfort, and a Kingdom, shall be made good to thee. The Lord therefore sues himself unto us in such arguments, so close as may out-bid other comforts that we have in the word in any waies of sin: and therefore tels them of Honey, and Milk, and Rayment, and Gold, and Silver, and all such things as are precious in the eyes of men; such as are of esteem with us, and tenders his Son unto us upon such kind of notions that every one of them might be prevalent arguments to gaine the hearts of sinners to come in unto God: this is the way of God; that he comes into the hearts of his people, with the most prevalent arguments; such reasons as one would think were impossible to be gainesaid. I appeal to the hearts of those who have been acquainted with the work of God upon them. How did God come to your hearts? did he not come with mighty strong arguments to you? The Devil he tempts, and he comes with strong arguments; and God he comes, and tempts with strong arguments; the Devil draws, and God draws; Gods mercies draw stronger than the Devil can: Oh! it was mercy to that soul, and (the truth is) when the Lord pleases to work effectually upon the soul, he can present stronger arguments to draw the heart of a sinner to him, than it is possible for the Devil to prevail against.

CHAP. 77. OF THE TWELFTH ARGUMENT.

The Twelfth Argument: Manifesting the exceeding willingness of God and Christ to be reconciled to sinners.

Neither way is there in this twelfth Argument that he in the hearts of sinners: whatsoever Objections

jections lie in the hearts of sinners, God hath waies to answer al those, and he doth it in his word, and by his Spirit; As now, What would a sinner object? If you object your unworthiness of such mercies as God doth offer unto you, and therefore it is unlikely that ever God wil bestow that mercy on you: observe, *Esa. 55.* there is a place that God intends directly to answer that objection, that it may never hinder any sinner from coming in unto him: saith God, *Come ye to the waters, and be that hath no monies, come ye, buy and eat: yea come buy Wine, and Milk without mony, and without price.* Note in one verse there is three times Come without Mony; he that hath no Mony come and Eat, and then, buy without Mony, and then without price, What is the meaning of this? here you are to know; that the promises of the Gospel are set out to you by Wine, & Milk, & so by bread, afterwards by those things that are most delightful & most useful for the nature of man; the Gospel is set out by such things; and so it is in Scripture by things that are the most excellent of al. Sometimes by a Kingdom; for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand: there is the argument; the Kingdom of God is at hand. and sometimes by a marriage; when God sends to people to be reconciled, he sends to them with this Argument; that it is to marry them to his Son. And sometimes by a Supper; that God the Father invites too; a Supper wherein there is al kind of dainties: the great King makes a Supper at the marriage of his Son, and there are powerful Arguments that God useth.

O but I am unworthy saith a poor soul, What? that such a one as I, so vile, so wretched, and every way unworthy should have such things? this was the policy of the Devil at the first, the Devil labors to make sinners to slight the Gospel, to set at naught the counsels of God: so you have it in *Prov. 1.* to account the bloud of the Covenant a common thing: that is the first way. But if he cannot prevail that way; but the Lord doth shine through

through al mists, and il conceipts of the Gospel, and shews unto the Soul the excellency and beuty of his Son, and of the glorious things that are in the Gospel: then the Devil comes the other way. Indeed saith he there are glorious things, but thou art unworthy; thou art a wretched, base, vile Creature, and canst thou think that God should grant such things as these to thee? now the Lord answers this Objection; What saith God? Come without Money; What is that? that is; though thou hast no worthiness in thy self, though thou hast no abilities to buy any thing that is good; yet come, come yet & close with my Grace; that shal make thee rich enough; thou shalt have money enough that way: Come without money & without price, let never that Objection hinder thee; that thou art unworthy & unable to do any thing: the Lord calsthee without Money, & offers freely to thee, & therefore in the latter end of the Book of the Revelation it is said in the last Chapter the 17. ver. *And the Spirit, and the Bride say Come, and let him that beareth say Come, and let him that is a thirst, Come; and whosoever wil, let him take of the water of life freely.* How shal I ever think to have it? It is free, so that this Objection cannot hinder.

Obj. O! but there may lie another Objection; Thus, it may be, the Lord wil require, though he requires nothing that I shal do before hand, but wil grant his mercy freely: but when I am come, then perhaps things that are hard, wil be required at my hands: O! the waies of God they are hard waies, and then I must live so strictly, then I must make Conscience of my waies, and so abandon al my sins and Lusts, and what saith the Devil to a corrupt heart? What? wil you leave al such pleasant waies? and be so streightly bound? Then you must do nothing but according to the word of God, and of Conscience; farewell al the Comforts and Joyes of your life if you come once to be religious, and godly, these are the tentations that do keep of the hearts of men.

men. I appeal to you: have not some of your hearts been kept off from Jesus Christ, and the waies of God merely upon some such temptations as these? and indeed perhaps at first it may be so, for the nature of a man is changed.

But mark how this objection is taken away, when sinners are called to Christ, (I suppose you know the place) *Come unto me, ye that are weary, and heavily laden, and I will give you rest.*

But that concerns the former, and then afterwards when Christ had said so; come to me ye that are weary & heavily laden, and I will give you rest; *take my yoke upon you, my burthen &c.* It seems then we must be yoked and burthened: But marke what follows in ver. 30. *For my yoke is easy, and my burthen is light* (as if Christ should say) never harken to such a temptation of any difficulties in my waies: I assure you beforehand you will find that the Devil doth but gul you, deceive, and cozen you, I will warrant you that beforehand; that I will lay no yoke upon you, but you shal say when you come to beare it, it is an easy yoke, and though it be a burthen, yet you shal acknowledg it is a light burthen. This I dare say in the name of God unto al; come in al you that stand off from the waies of God; though the waies of God may seem hard to you at first, yet I dare say from God unto you, that you will find the waies of God more easy to you at last than ever you did in the waies of sin: *For certainly there is more trouble in the waies of sin than can be in the waies of God.* And when God calls upon you to come in to be reconciled, he doth profess this to you; that he wil require nothing of you but that which shal be more pleasant to you than any waies of sin that you lived in before: there be more comforts, and joy, and that for the present, than ever you had in the waies of sin; do but ask any one that hath made tryal of this, and desire them to speak their consciences to thee (I meane those that have had any apprehension of the

the love of Christ to them) yea have you began to walk in wisdomes waies, which are pleasantness, and so tread in those paths which are strowed with roses, and paved with peace? pray then speak plainly, how do you find your self? is it not better now than it was before? do you not find more ease, more comfort, and joy in these waies of God than you did before in any way of Sin? Oh such a one will profess unto you that they find more comfort than ever they did before: they find more sweet rest in communion with God in his waies in one day, than they found in the waies of sin in all their lives before. The Holy Spirit is pleading with the hearts of men saith the same *Prov. 2. 17. Her waies are waies of pleasantness, and her paths are peace.* If you will believe the Spirit of God, the waies of Godliness are waies of pleasantness, and all her paths, are paths of peace. What should hinder you then? It is neither your unworthiness, nor can be any hinderance nor the hardness of the way. These are the two great blocks that lie in the way; and God doth fully take away these in scripture; and if there be any other objection, I dare undertake bring what objections you can, (give me but a little time) to find out some manifest word, or other in the scripture that shall meet with the very objection. Then how doth this argue God exceeding willingness to be reconciled to sinners? If a man send his messenger to such a one to offer peace, and he thinks beforehand; Oh! but he will have this and this objection against me; but saith he to his servant that is employed in the business, you shall answer this objection thus, and the other objection thus.

THE CHAP.

CHAP. 73.

The thirteenth argument: Manifesting the exceeding willingness of God to be reconciled to sinners.

A Nother evidence of Gods willingness to be reconciled is this; that God is so importunate with sinners, he uses such strong arguments, that he first takes away objections, and then he is so importunate, he doth not meerly satisfy himself with offering of mercy: but he is very importunate in the work, and the importunity of God appeares. First in this; that the scripture expresses God crying out after sinners: not only seeking out after sinners, but calling, and crying: so the words in the Original are, of Gods beseeching to be reconciled, of God calling to sinners, in *Prov. 1*. It is said of wisdom, that it cries, the Lord cries out, and that in *Isa. 55*.

When he makes a proclamation he begins first with, Oh! yes, Oh! every one that thirsteth come to the waters, and he that hath no mony, and there is the offer of Christ with a proclamation.

Further, Gods importunity is manifest in this; that he comes over again with a thing, and is not content with the expressing of himself. But he doth it again, and again, and again he is at it, as in *Isa. 55. vers. the first*, Se how many times there is crying in one verse, Ho! every one that thirsteth come ye, and he that hath no mony come; and come the third time; three times in one verse saith God come to sinners, and then in the third verse, *Incline your eare, and come unto mee (saith God) and hear, and your souls shal live, and I will make an everlasting Covenant with you*; there is another promise; Even the sure mercies of David: so hear in one short scripture four times come, saith God.

God; O! how importunate is God with sinners? God doth not do with us, as commonly wee do with him, God seeks after sinners more earnestly than sinners seek after God; thus we seek to God for mercy; we pray to God for mercy; we content our selves with praying once, and seldome looke after our prayers what becoms of them; but God he cries to us to come and if we do not come the first time, then he crys come, come, & come four times together we are ready to think if our petitions be repeated twice in prayer, it is a rautology & this shews the earnestness of the spirit of God in it, and he is exceeding willing.

CHAP. 74.

The Fourteenth Argument: manifesting the exceeding willingness of God to be reconciled to sinners.

AN other evidence is this; when yet sinners do not come, yet the lord leaves them not; but he doth then appeal to the very consciences of sinners, and deales with them that way; and that is very powerful; he deals with sinners that way to breake their hearts: (when after all his arguments they com not in) then the lord appeals to their own consciences, & then wil plead with them in a way of appealing to their consciences, why they should not come in and yeild unto him; and this way is verrey powerful to prevail with sinners. If you would go, and prevail with any one for a thing that you have a desire to accomplish, what course do you take? either you send to them, or go to them; and then you open the case to them, and yet they are not moved & then you bring powerful arguments to perswad them; and yet they do not move then you take away all their objections, and yet that doth not prevail upon them; then you do importune them, and if that do not overcome them, what is the next way you take? then you appeal to their owne consciences, then say you, nay, I appeal to your own conscience, whether

I have said it or no; I will even leave it to your conscience, and judge of it in the presence of God: let your own conscience be your judge, and sometimes this prevails more than all the arguments in the world. When you appeal to a mans own conscience, that he doth deal unequally, and very ill; that he doth not yield; but God doth thus he doth appeal unto mens consciences. I will give you some scripture for it in the 43. *Esa. 46.* Put me in fear and bondage; let us plead together; declare thou that thou mayest be justified; come (saith God) let us hear what you can say; let us plead together; Declare thou that thou mayest be justified; declare it, say what thou canst, try whether you or I be in the right way, I will even be contented to leave it to you (only let us plead, and declare what we can) But that place seems yet to be more full than you have in *Jerem. 21. 3.* you have often expressions of Gods pleading with his people in the ninth verse; and then you have it again at least three times in this Chapter that the lord saith he will plead in v. 13. you have it again, wherefore wilt thou plead with me? &c. and then in the 35. vers. Behold I will plead with thee saith God, but now God pleads thus in his pleading, he will leave it, he will appeal to the very consciences of men, and that you have in *Exod. 18. 25.* vers. yet you say, the way of the lord is not equal, how? house of Israel, (as if he should say) consider and answer, Is not my way equal? will not your owne consciences answer you that his ways are equal? the Lord is content to plead with his people, & the conclusion of his pleading is a leaving it to their consciences, to the people, (as if God should say thus as he doth often) God comes by his spirit in the ministry of his word, I appeal to you, (saith he not often those so?) and saith, do you think in your very consciences that these men that you walk in are right? & my way are they good? is it any way equal that wretched sinful creatures should take such liberty to go on at their daies and please themselves in the lusts of their own vaine hearts, and now,

When they can sin no more nor longer, that then they should cry to God for mercy, and that then he should pardon them, and accept them unto his favour? Is this equal? is not the Lord infinitely more worthy of all the strength thou hast if it were tenthousand times more than it is, than that thou shouldst have given it up to thy lusts and vanities? Conscience, speak whether God be not most worthy of all? and what wert thou made for? no other end but meerly to eat and drink and satisfie thy flesh, and have thy lusts heere for a while? dost thou thinke in thy conscience that God did intend no other end for thee when he sent thee into the world? you have been upon your sick bedds and cried to God, and have promised to God better obedience, now are your waies equal to take your liberty to sin after God hath thus delivered you, and after God hath preserved your life when you were at the very brinke of death, and that death was ready to deliver you up into the hands of eternal misery; and do you think that this was Gods end in preserving your life that you might have more time to sin against him, and might spend the latter part of your strength in bringing dishonor to his Name? was this Gods end in preserving your life? God might have struck you one blow more, and sent you down to eternal misery, and then God should have had no more dishonor of you, but should have had the Glory of his Justice upon you: Now do you think that this is the end why God did preserve you, that you should have more years added to your life, that you should have more time to sin against him? This argues Gods willingness to be reconciled, that the Lord is thus pleading with you: and let me speak to every one in this place that hath felt God pleading thus with them, know, that the Lord by this work of his, doth strive with thee to bring thee to be reconciled unto him. This is no other thing than the striving of the Spirit of God himself with you, though perhaps you think this is troublefom to you. Many men and women when they have their

con-

consciences pleading thus, they think it is troublesome. Oh wretched man or woman that thou art, this work of Conscience is nothing but God pleading with thee to save thy Soul: Thou hast stood against his Word that hath been preached to thee, and now God seeks to thee the other way by his Spirit to strive in thy Conscience, he appeals to thy own Conscience, that so thou mayest be brought in to be reconciled unto him. But when God hath no mind to be reconciled, then saith God to Conscience, let him alone; and then the sinner goes on with a hard heart, and blesses himself that his Conscience is quiet: Oh no, no, Conscience is quiet, but God hath left laboring any more with thee.



CHAP. 75.

The Fifteenth Argument: Manifesting the exceeding willingness of God to be reconciled to sinners.

BUT further, the Lord shews his willingness to be reconciled to sinners in this, that when this way will not prevail you will think there were never another way to be found, yet there is another way when God doth deal in a familiar way as man to man, when he hath brought his Arguments, and answered Objections, and been importunate, and pleaded, then truly sometimes, (if it be a tender hearted man) perhaps his heart doth even break within him, and he is ready to burst out with tears, because of the stoutness and frowardness of such a one, that will ruine himself and stand out against so much reason, and that prevailing more than all the other arguments, especially when he is to speak to one that he hath any reference to, as a Father, the Father perhaps persuades the Child, and answers what the Child hath to say, is importunate, appeals to the conscience of the Child, yet he stands out stubbornly, and at length the Father

Father or Mother can hold no longer, but burst out in tears, lamenting the hardness of heart of such a one. Now if a Child that is stubborn should look in at a key-hole, and see his Father, or Mother, shedding of tears, because of his hardness of heart, then the Child will certainly be convinced of this. Now certainly my Father loves me, and all he doth, it is but for my good, certainly thus did Christ, when he came to Hjerusalem he wept over it, Upon what ground? O! that thou hadst known in this thy day the things that concern thy peace: O! that thou hadst known, & Christ fel a weeping. Now we are to know this, that the tears of Christ at that time concern sinners now, as verily & truly as they did concern sinners at that very instant, and we are to look upon Christs caridge of himself to sinners in former times, as at this instant, concerning us, and amongst us. Now I would appeal to you; suppose Christ were born in this world in the flesh again as he was, and should come and look towards this commonwealth and should come hither; and say, O! *England, England*, O! that thou hadst known the things that concern thy peace, and should weep over *London*, or weep over *Westminster*; as he did over that City of *Hjerusalem*, Would not this break our hearts? Would not we take this as a great Argument that Christ was very desirous of the peace of this City or place? Now concerning every particular Soul, it is true, and every one should make use of that Scripture, and apply it to themselves, as if Christ stood weeping over it, and say, Oh that thou hadst known at least in this thy day the things that concern thy peace, Would not this break your hearts? this Town that Christ sends his Gospel amongst. And suppose you could see him bodily, Jesus Christ standing here, and one tear trickling down after another, & saying, O! that this people did but know the things that concern their peace, at least in this their day when they have a price put into their hands, before the Gospel Sun goes down, or

is eclipsed, surely we should say that Christs tears argue the outflowing of his bowels towards them, it may be their time wil not continue long, O! that they knew it now. If you did see Christ thus weeping; I suppose this would be a mighty argument to you, that Christ were willing to be reconciled to you. We are I say to make use of that Scripture as if it were now. And though Christ doth not shed tears now in Heaven, yet there is as much compassion in the heart of Christ now, as ever there was here upon earth he hath lost no compassion by going to Heaven, and therefore know that Jesus Christ doth look at this day upon this Congregation, and many particular Souls (it is propable) Christ more specially eyes and saith in his very heart, Oh! that such a Soul, such a Servant, such a Youth, Oh that they did but know the things that concerns their peace, for now the Gospel is opened to them, and a day of salvation is made known to them, and they are labored to be drawn from their evil waies to embrace me; and Oh that they did know these things that concern their peace. And thus it appears how willing God is to be reconciled.

I that afterwards shew somewhat about Christ in a more special manner that sinners should come and be reconciled unto God.

CHAP. 76.

The sixteenth Argument: Manifesting the exceeding willingness of God to be reconciled to sinners.

Further, there is an other evidence of the willingness of God to be reconciled unto sinners and that is this. The Lord doth foresee, that after he hath done all to be reconciled unto sinners, let him do what he can, the Lord foresees what a little honor he shal have (for the present

sent at least in this world by them; he sees that after they are brought in that yet still there will be abundance of corruption and they will dishonor God extravagantly now; and will grieve the Holy Spirit that doth thus draw them; he sees that they will walk more offensively; and it may be, scandalously towards their brethren; and dishonor the profession of religion. God sees what a deal of doings and stir, he shall have with those that he doth bring into himself; and yet for all this he goes on with his work and labor with the hearts of sinners, notwithstanding all that he doth foresee. And then the last of all is this; that after the Lord hath used all these means to bring sinners to come in, and break their hearts, that they might be reconciled to him, (though they that stand out against him, and plead, and weep over them, and mourn;) yet the Lord is content to waite, and yet a long time upon sinners, and not to take advantage against them for their rejecting of this Grace of his that he tender to them. This scripture I named before is sufficient for that, Isa. 30. 18. *And therefore will the Lord wait that he may be gracious.* Oh! how many yeares hath the Lord waited upon some of you? We have cause to stand and admire at the Grace of God that even he would once offer mercy to us; that after so many offenses and such importunities so prevail with our hearts, and we forwardly have rejected this Grace, that now God should waite upon us to heal our souls, and at length overcome us; Oh! this manifests the goodness of God, and the tenderness of his heart to be willing to be reconciled unto sinners, and therefore in Jer. 19. Manasseh God saith unto sinners in the last verse; *I have seen thy adulteries, and thy neighings, and thine Lamentations of thy ill bondage; and thy abominations.* *Wo unto thee O Jerusalem wilt thou not be made clean?* *When shall it once be?* Saith God. Oh! that once it might be, I am content to stay again, and again. Oh! when shall it once be? Let not all my labor be in vaine; Oh! here is

the fullness of the expressions of God, and that place likewise in Isa. 57. Is observable for this purpose the 17. and 18. verses, *'For the iniquity of his Covetousness was I wroth, and Smote him; I bid me, and was wroth, and he went on frowardly in the way of his heat, I have seen his waies and wil heal him &c.* Though he went on, and was wroth; yet (saith God) I have seen his waies, and wil heal him; I wil not take advantage; I wil be content after all their froward rejections of all the offers of Grace, yet I wil heal them for all that. The frowardness is that that hath reference (not only to unprofitableness under afflictions) but when one is dealt kindly withal, and doth not answer according to his kindness, but wil have his own wil such a one doth go on frowardly. Now then if we could put all these together that have been named of Gods willingness towards sinners to bring them in to be reconciled to him; Oh Lord! how infinite would the Grace, and goodness of God appeare? How were God to be glorified in his Grace?

I see I cannot possibly come to these things, that I have heretofore propounded; As what needs all this and the like? But that must be done, or the reasons why God doth deal thus.

A word or too at this time for that; why God doth deal thus, why doth God deal thus with sinners in such a manner?

First, It is because mercy pleases him. *Micha. 7. 18.* there God makes a large promise of pardon of sin, because mercy pleaseth him. Now that that is pleasing unto any creature; that the creature loves to do it, and loveth to do it to the ful, to the height, as a pleasure you know, to enjoy the creature; to care, and drink, and sport is very pleasing to a voluptuous man, and therefore he doth desire to have this to the ful: a large bag of Gold pleases a covetous man, therefore he is never satisfied, but would have it to the ful; Honor pleaseth

pleaseth an ambitious, man, and therefore he never hath enough : so mercy it pleases God, and therefore (as I may with Holy reverence speak) God scarce thinks he hath ever done enough to shew the riches of his Grace.

Secondly, God doth it ; because the blood of his Son doth cry continually in his eares for mercy, and it is of such infinite worth, and value and the obedience of his Son in shedding of his bloud it hath been so acceptable unto God, and is ; that whosoever this blood is pleaded for, the Lord must needs grant it to the utmost. Now it is the blood of Jesus Christ that is shed for sinners, that doth plead with God the Father ; that al this mercy might be shewed. It is said in the scripture, that the blood of Christ speaks better things than the blood of Abel ; the blood of Abel cries loude for vengeance ; vengeance Lord against sinners : But the blood of Christ cries aloud mercy ; mercy, Lord for sinners, and God heares the cry of his Sons blood. What is this that cries ? The blood of my Son for mercy for sinners : let them have mercy, yea let them have mercy to the ful. Then the fludgates of mercy come to be opened, though (if it were not for the blood of Christ) the patience of God would let out some common favors : but when God comes to satisfy the cries of the blood of Christ for mercy saith God, open al the fludgates now, and let in streams of mercy for sinners ; let mercy be shewed to the highest degree that can be, if the blood of my Son cry for it, it must be, (though it requires wonderful mercy) it must be great, rich, glorious mercy, it is not a drop, but had need of a Sea, of mercies to answer it. I but saith God, the blood of my son cryes for mercy, and though there be need of an infinite Ocean of mercy for to cleanse the soul of such a sinner, it must needs be granted ; because the blood of my son cryes for it. When you finde God manifesting himselfe to your souls in waies of mercy, it comes from the blood of Jesus Christ that cries to God the father for mercy to be bestowed

on you, and this is the sum and substance of all these expressions of Gods grace toward sinners. (We thinke that so be very strange that ever such an infinite God should condescend to sinners; but when we come to examine the reason, we need not wonder at it; we see now from whence it all coms; it springs all from the ever living fountaine of the unsearchable rich grace of God in Christ, though (at the very reading) we may wonder that ever God should do so; and perhaps some men may thinke these are but the straynes of ministers to make it so; but when we come to understand the bottom, the ground of all, then we must acknowledge the reality of it: no wonder, God shews mercy to such souls so unworthy and so vile; why? Because the blood of his son cries for mercy.

CHAP. 53.

Christ's willingness to be Reconciled to sinners, further Opened.

NO W before we come to answer the Objections, or to any application; there is yet something more to be opened unto you. [as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in CHRIST'S stead] as the heart of God is so set upon it to be reconciled unto sinners: so is *Jesus Christ*; it is true, *Christ is God*: but *Christ*, and God are here spoken of severally; *Christ is the same God with the father*: but he is God and man; God incarnate; God the mediator between the father and us: so that it will be exceeding useful to shew how the heart of *CHRIST* is set upon Reconciliation of sinners to God (for the Apostle doth come in the name of *Christ*, as well as of God the father) now that the heart of *Christ* is in it; that appears in the understanding

ing of the great worke of Reconciliation. That he hath undertaken it, and that so willingly as he hath done; Certainly if Christ had not been much set upon this work to bring sinners to be reconciled unto the Father, he would never have undertaken such a work, which he knew would prove so difficult to him, and he knew what it would cost him: but yet he took it willingly, and delightfully, and for that compare those two Scriptures the first in Psal. 40. 7. *Then said I, Lo, I come: in the Volume of thy book it is written of me.* It begins in ver. 6. *Sacrifice, and offering thou didst not desire, mine ears thou didst open: burnt offering, and sin offering thou didst not require: then said I, Lo, I come: in the Volume of thy book it is written of me; I delight to do thy will Oh God.* It is a Psalm of Christ, and a Prophecy of him, and that it is of him it appears plainly if you compare the Scripture in Heb. 10. at the beginning, and so on; there you have the Apostle quoting this very Text (only with a little difference in the word.) Now there are three, or four things that are here to be observed of Christ in his willingness to come, and undertake the great work of making Attonement between God and sinners. *Mine Ears hast thou opened; that is one. Lo I come: and then, I delight to do thy will, and thy Law is within my heart.* There are these four. Lo I come saith Christ to do it. It appears plainly that there was a Covenant between the Father, and the Son from all eternity that Christ should come in due time into the world, and take our natures upon him: Now the time was for Christ to come. There is many that will agree to do such a thing beforehand: but when it comes to be done (if they see there will be any difficulty in it, and that they shal endure some hardship) they hang back. But Christ had agreed from all eternity with his Father, that at such a time he would come into the world, and take the nature of man upon him, and be in the form of a servant, and be made a curse for mans sins, and all that

he

he might reconcile sinners unto himself. This was the agreement. Now the time approaches for him to come, and undertake this great work; when the time came, Observe now how Christs heart was in it. He did not hang back; he did not repent him of the Covenant: But *I come, I come*, (saith Christ) as we use to express our selves when we are called to do a thing that we love to do; we say; *I come I come*: now the time is come for you to do that which you undertook to do; to go into the world, to take the nature of man; be made in form of a Servant, and to bear my wrath and to satisfie my Justice for the sin of man. *I come, I come* saith Christ, and he doth not only come: but come *with delight* to do thy *Will*, and what *was* this will? It was that Christ should be humbled to the death of the Crofs, Though I knew it would cost my life: yet I delight to do it: because my heart is so much set upon reconciling Sinners unto thy self, and not only so but *thy Law is in my heart*, it hath gotten a deep impression in my heart; thy Law; that is, that Law of thine whereby I am tyed to this that I have undertaken; for it is within my heart, in the very midst of my bowels that I should do it. And then Fourthly [*Mine ears hast thou opened*] the words are; mine ears hast thou boared. The meaning of that Phrase must be understood by comparing it that way which was of God in the time of the Law, commanding that if a servant would not goe out of his service in the years of Jubilee that his master should take an awle, and boare his ear and so he should be a servant forever. This Phrase hath allusion to that; as if Christ should say thus, I am content that I might do this work to be as a servant whose ear is boared, who must be a servant for ever: so saith Christ, that I might accomplish the work of reconciling sinners to thy self, I am content to be as a servant whose ear is boared: thereby signifying; that he would be willing to listen to any thing that should be commanded him. His masters commandments are not greivous.

grievous; but it is his meat and drink to do the wil of his Lord.

Well might the Apostle say, *As in Christs stead we beseech you* as if he should say, Christs heart is much towards sinners that he might bring them to be reconciled unto God, and we in his name come to prevail with sinners no get them in unto God.

Secondly, Observe what was the first Sermon that ever Christ preached; [*For the the Kingdom of Heavens is at hand*]: that is the first Sermon, calling sinners to repent; because the Kingdome of grace wherein the Gospel of God should reign, that is at hand saith Christ, and then Christ would preach so as to gain most, when he had the greatest Auditors; What was it that he preached? when he was amongst the Jews at the Feast of dedication, In the great day of the Feast (saith the Scripture) *Christ lift up his voice, and cryed; Hoe every one that is a thirst.* A Minister when he is to preach to a great Congregation, and he is not like to come to them again, he should speak on such a subject that his heart is most in. Now Christ at the Feast of dedication he was not like to come to them sodainly again to use such an argument to them; he cryed, *Hoe, every one that is a thirst; come,* and Christ further doth profess that it is the end why he came into the World; *To save, & to seek that which was lost: Not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.* That is the great end that he came into the world about; it was the great subject of his preaching, the great errand that he came into the world about.

And further observe, with what lovingness, gentleness and sweetness he doth it; what a gracious invitation we have in *Math. 11. Come unto me al you that are weary, and heavy laden, and I wil give you rest:* and he professes in *John 6. 37, None that comes to me wil I cast of.* I wil not cast of any that do come to me: Yea he tells us, *that he wil not quench the smoking*

smoking flax, nor break the bruised reed; to encourage sinners he tells them if there be but any stirrings of the heart unto him; but as the smoking flax, and as the bruised reed; yet he will not break out, nor quench the other: but he will encourage new beginnings though never so small in sinners coming unto him. These are the expressions of Christ towards sinners to shew them how tender he is of them; and when the time drew near for Christ to suffer, then (if ever) one would think (if the heart of Christ were not much in it) Christ would draw back; not only when he was to come into the world: but in the work of his Mediation when he was to suffer the violence of the wrath of his father; to be poured out upon him. But mark how he doth express himself in *Luk. 22. verse, 15.* And he said unto them, *with desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer.* Why did Christ desire? he desired, that is, strongly desired to eat this passover; why? because he knew, that as soon as ever he had eaten it, he should be called to suffer for mans sin; and to accomplish the great work of redemption for sinful men. Then it was to be done, Why? Was there any such cause that Christ should be so strongly upon it to desire this passover? One would have thought, that above all passovers Christ should have been afraid of this: because this was to put a period to his life: for then Christ was himself to be made the passover to suffer: when this passover came once, he knew that he was to be made the paschal Lamb, and yet he doth desire above all to eat this passover, thereby shewing, what a minde he had to finish the work whereby sinners might come to be reconciled unto God. And another expression there is, *I have a baptisme to be baptized with, and here am I streightned till it be accomplished.* Christ was streightned in his heart til the work was done. You may see how much the heart of Christ was in it to be reconciled unto sinners; when he came to do the thing indeed, when the wrath of God was even just coming upon

upon him, then (though nature had some kind of reluctance) he saith, *if it be possible, let this cup pass from me*, to shew how sensible his humane nature was of it, yet presently, *Not my will but thy will but thy will be done.* And the scripture tells us that he did *make his soul an offering for sin*, and that he layd down his life.

And further after that Christ had layd down his life and risen again, mark one expression more that shews how willing Christ is to have sinners reconciled, and brought in unto the Father, and to be at peace with him and that is very remarkable in *Luke, 24. verse 46.* And so on, note what was that first preaching of Christ, repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. So here in this world in his bodily presence, this may seem to be his last sermon, What was it he said unto them, *Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer.* Wel, in *vers. 47.* *And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name amongst all nations beginning at Jerusalem,* and ye are witnesses of these things, and then by and by he was caught up into heaven. That which I note this scripture for is this; that after Christ had been so notoriously abused in his sufferings, yet this did not hinder his earnest thirsting after reconciliation of those that had put him to death, and had so abused him: saith he it is written, *that it behoved Christ to suffer &c.* To begin at Jerusalem, and that is that that I would have done, *The repentance should be preached to all nations,* but begin at Jerusalem. Why begin at Jerusalem? Because Jerusalem was the place where Christ was put to death; immediately before he was crowned with Thorns, mockt, a Reed put into his hands, spit upon, *The Children of Barrabas rather than him*, yea and they cryed *Away with him*, they carried him to the Cross, and there nailed him til he was dead, and thus they dealt with Christ there, yet Christ would have repentance preach't to all Nations, but saith he, above all, think

of *Jerusalem*, and begin at *Jerusalem* let them have it in the first place, *Jerusalem* that took away my life, that killed me. If any thing in the world could take of the heart of Christ from being reconciled to sinners, one would have thought that that which he had done to him at *Jerusalem*, should have taken of his heart, but he would have them begin at *Jerusalem*. It is a notable Text of Scripture to us, and you shall find it the most remarkable conversion and bringing in of sinners, was at that Sermon of *Peter*, when *Peter* charged them that they had crucified Christ, the most famous conversion that ever was made of those people that put Christ to death, the most famous work of Gods reconciling sinners to himself, of Christ bringing in of sinners by the preaching of the Gospel it was by bringing in of those sinners, and therefore in the last Sermon that Christ preached from Heaven, as the first Sermon upon Earth, and the last Sermon upon Earth, and the most solemn Sermon that was at the dedication of the Temple, is altogether about bringing in sinners to be reconciled to God. So the last Sermon that he preached from Heaven, or that ever he will preach til he comes again, so in *Revel. 22. 17.* And the spirit & the Bride said, come, & let him that heareth say, Come, and let him that is a thirst, say Come, and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely. These are the last words in effect that are at the conclusion of the book that ever Christ would speak til he came to Judgment, never would he speak more in that way to the children of men until he came in a new world: But in this word here is the last in this expression; Let him that is a thirst, and whosoever will, let him come and take of the water of life freely. Now the Objections they will come in, as first:



CHAP. 78.

Objections Answered concerning the willingness of God and Christ to be reconciled to sinners.

Object. You wil say, *Why should God do al this? and Christ do al this? you tel us that God is so willing to be reconciled, and hath so exprest himself, and Christ so willing to be reconciled, and hath so exprest himself, by entreating and beseeching; but both God and Christ knows, we can do nothing of our selves, and therefore to what end is al this that you have spoken? as if we should go into Golgothas or burial places, and entreat the dead to rise out of their graves, To what purpose would it be? we are dead in sins and trespasses, and now if we can do nothing, al that you have spoken is but to little purpose.*

To that purpose I answer. First though it is true, we are dead in sins and trespasses and are not able to performe any true saving work by our own strength, yet first al those expressions of God and Christ in his word, and so of the ministers of God in their names, it may be of this use to stir up common gifts and graces of the spirit of God in us, and that is for to have them stirred up to the utmost that possible may be, people must not think (that because they cannot do any woike that is indeed saving in it self, any work of spiritual life) that therefore there is nothing to be done by them, we are to know that though the saving works of God be more rare, yet there are common workes of the spirit, that God doth dispence to many, yea to most, and in some degree or other to al, especially to those that live under the sound of the Gospel, there are none that live under the sound of the Gospel but they have some common gifts of the Spirit of God, in one degree or other. Now the Lord

would have these stirred up to the utmost, (though it cannot be in a sanctified way) and these expressions of God & Christ to sinners, have a great deal of efficacy in them to stir up what common gifts of Gods Spirit you have, and if sinners do not this they cannot expect that God should do much towards them. Consider what power God hath given them, and what common gifts they have already, and let that be acted to the utmost, and then they may wait stil for more from God. This is a truth, that there are none that do perish, but God hath this to charge them with, that they did not stir up the common gifts of Gods spirit. Secondly, (though we cannot do any thing of our selves) yet God knows that that is the best way to convey true saving Grace unto them, a spirit of life into them, it is by this means rather than by others, the Lord chooseth this way rather than others. *You have received the Spirit, saith Paul to the Galatians, And how have you received it? by the preaching of the Law, or by the preaching of the Gospel? Which way was the conveyance of the spirit of God to you? Was it by the preaching of the Law, or the preaching of the Gospel? not by the one but by the other.* (Though there be a great deal of use of preaching the Law) yet that which doth convey the Spirit and grace into the Conscience, it is the opening the riches of the treasure of the Grace of God in the Gospel, therefore this Objection hath no strength in it; to say, we have no power in our selves. God doth entreat and beseech because by this meanes he puts forth a power into the hearts of those he doth intend to save everlastingly. If we should entreat dead men to rise, it were a folly for us, because we cannot convey any power into them, but it is not in vain for God, because he is able while he is entreating and beseeching to convey a power into them.

Obj. *But you say in the second place what need the Lord do all this? God might work it by a word from himselfe, God might presently shew forth his almighty power*

power to bring in sinners to himselfe, he need not stand praying and intreating and answering Objections, bringing of arguments and the like: because he can by his almighty power bring in sinners; he can breake the stoutest heart that lives upon the earth, and pul downe the proudest spirit, and therefore what need God do all this.

Ans. I Answered who art thou O man! that reasonest against God? but if you wil have reasons, there are many to be given.

First because God having to work with a rational creature, he wil work suitable to the nature of that creature that he is working upon. If God were to work meerly uppon stones, to raise out of the stones children unto Abraham, then God would but only speak the word and say let it be done, & it should be done, but the Lord loves to do it in a way suitable to a rational creature, now that way is this.

First that the understanding should be enlightened, and the heart should be gained and wrought upon, they knowing what it doth, it should come to do what it doth freely and willingly (though we have no free wil at the first) yet when wee do embrace the gospel, then the Lord doth cause the hearts of men to embrace it willingly, and this is a great part of the gospel of God to shew himselfe to his creature, he wil work his own work: but such a way as shal be suitable to his creature. Again, (if the Lord should bring in sinners to himselfe by his almighty power) then therewould not so much of the beauty, and riches of his grace appear as there doth this way. If God should effectually work it by his own hand (I say) the glory of his grace would not so gloriously shine forth. Now it is the special designe that God hath in all his workes about redemption; that the glory of the riches of his grace might appear to men, and Angel's that they might magnify it. Now what can be more to magnify grace? then when a sinner shal come

to view the several workings of Gods mercy towards him; how the Lord hath provided a way of Reconciliation, and that (though the soul were backward, and hting of) yet the Lord still followed on, and put on the soul; and would not suffer the soul to die, and perish in the sins of it. What wil magnifie Grace more than this? the way of bringing in sinners to be reconciled unto himself wil be a principal subject for the Saints to be blessing of God to al eternicy. And therefore you Christians that have found the work of God bringing in your hearts to himself, observe what Gods work is; marke the several waies of Gods working with your souls! For know that those several waies of Gods working with your souls now, wil be the subject of your eternal praises in Heaven. And hence it is that God doth go on in such several expressions, that the riches of his Grace might appear the more fully. Yea, and further, that by this means he might gain the hearts of sinners everlastingly to himself; there is nothing wil gain them so unto God, as this declaration of the riches of his Grace in the Gospel. And when the sinner shal see, (not only that God is reconciled) but how God hath set his heart upon it, how earnest God hath bin in it, this wil engage the heart of a sinner for ever unto God, and hence it is; that those sinners that have felt most of the Grace of God bringing them into be reconciled are those that keep closest unto God. As for such as are only stop in the way of their sins by the terrors of the Law, and are not acquainted with the mystery of the Grace of God in the Gospel, they seldom hold out, though for a while out of slavery to their consciences they do not commit such and such sins. This I make no question one may be brought to do; that hath not true saving Grace; that they may not dare to commit a sin in secret for a while (merely out of terror of conscience) But now these men, they are only wrought upon by the terrors of the Law; they seldom hold out, but (though conscience bear a strong hand to keep them from sin for a long time,) yet at length they break those bonds: But

now those that have not only conscience enlightened, and do not see the danger of sin only, but come to have these beames of the Grace and goodness of God let out into their hearts, and their hearts are so gained unto God by this; that they wil never depart from him: but their hearts wil follow to the bountiffulness of God. The difference of these two may be exprest by this similitude. Look how it is in frosty wether when the water is frozen; there are two waies to come by the water, the Husband-man goes in the morning, and sees the water frozen, and beates it to pieces, and breaks the yce. but though he doth so the next morning he comes, and sees it frozen as much as before: but when there comes warm weather, and dissolves the yce then it quite goes away in flakes: so heuce the hearts of al sinners are frozen, and God comes with the terror of the Law, and beats them in pieces, and breaks them that way, I but at last they freeze again, and grow as hard again as ever: But now when the Lord comes with the beams of his Grace, and shines upon them: then their Hearts thaw, and the yce goes away, and their hearts come in flowing to God in another manner than when he comes by his strokes. Now because the Lord sees that this is such a way to engage the hearts of sinners to come in unto him, therefore he doth not only put forth such an almighty power: but comes in such a way as this; when the sinner cannot be able to perceive the hand of God, that is the almighty power that doth the work: yet the sinner can perceive the shining of Gods Grace, and his goodness, and the expressions of his love, and the like: this is apparently before the Eyes of the sinner to admire, and works upon the heart, when the other is more secret.

Obj. Thirdly, If God, and Christ be so willing to be reconciled unto sinners, then you wil say, what is the reason that there are no more reconciled? One would think that al sinners in the World should be reconciled to him, bee may reconcile al; Is it not as easie for God to reconcile one as wel as another? God many times tels us
that

that few shal be saved: Yea, Christ himself tells us so. Now this that you have preached about Gods, and Christs willingness to be reconciled; One would think that al the world should come in to be reconciled, otherwise how wil it appear that they are so willing?

Ans. For the answer to that, the heart of God & Christ are much set uppon Reconciliation with sinners; (but so as may be suitable to other ends that God hath: God wil not have the work of his mercy manifested so as it shal crosse any other work that he hath to do,) so farr as the Glory of his mercy may be manifested without crossing of some other work that God hath to do, so farr it is let out, not to al. Why? Because it wil not be suitable to some other ends that God hath to bring about; that he should be reconciled unto al sinners.

Object. You wil say, to other ends; Why? Do Gods ends crosse one another? If Gods Heart be for Reconciliation with sinners, how should this Crosse any other thing that God hath to do?

Ans. For answer; (though things may seem to us, one to be crosse to the other:) yet there is a blessed concord in Gods ends, and his waies, and it wil appear plainly one day before the Children of men, and Angels, and it wil be the great work of God, hereafter to manifest that those things that seem most to be crosse one to another: yet wil be very Advantagious and assisting to the Promoting, and Coronation of this blessed work.

As it is in the Heavens, there is the motion of the Heavens; they have one motion by which they are carryed one way, and there are the Starres, they have another particular motion of their own, and yet there is a concord in the motions of the Heavens. In any work that a man doth, as in a Clock, there is one wheel that runs one way so farr, and another meets with it, they seem to run quite contrary waies, and yet take them altogether, and they do al run to the end that the work is intended

tended for, and yet seem to go contrary; the Cross going of the wheels is the right going of the Clock: So God seems to work in the works of his Grace one way, and in the works of his justice another way, and they seem to go quite contrary one to the other: But the truth is, they worke al to the end that the workman makes it for; here is the Grace, and mercy of God thus manifested in entreating, and beseeching sinners to be reconciled; It goes thus far, and then when it hath had its ends, then comes the stroak of Gods justice, and that strikes another way, and al makes to the beauty of the work of God, that he might have glory in al; So though God be thus earnest, (yet it is no Argument that al sinners should be reconciled:) because it appears to be the beauty of Gods work which shal appear another day; the work of mercy thus farr, and the work of justice to farr: this we are not able to understand throughly now: but it is left to the great day to be understood.

Further, It may be answered, that these expressions are chiefly intended towards those that belong to his eternal election; but revealed in such a general way as none should exclude himself: therefore the charge of the Ministers of the Gospel is to preach to every creature, because we do not know who they be that do belong to the election, but it is for the sake of Gods elect ones that these things are reconciled in such a full way as they are; such things should be taught in a Congregation where there are many thousands: but if there be but a few that belong to the election of Grace, God aims at them most: though he may aime at the other too for to lessen their sins, and sometimes to aggravate them: Yet know, if there be but a few, that it is for you, and for your sake that these things are preacht, and these may serve to answer to those objections.

CHAP. 79.

Use, 1. Admire Gods infinite Grace in enterating to be reconciled to sinners. Considering. 1. What it is God intreats for. 2. Who are intreated. 3. By whom you are intreated. 4. What need bath God of you?

USE.

IN the first place upon al what hath been said of the willingness of God, and Christ to be reconciled unto sinners, that they thus do entreate sinners we are taught; First, to stand and admire at the infinite riches of the Grace of God, and especially you who have felt this work of God effectually upon your Hearts; You who have found God wooing, and suing to your hearts: give God the glory of his Grace, and admire at it. It were mercy for the Lord once to offer upon any terms to be reconciled unto sinners, or to shew them any favor. Meerly to offer it, that is grace; that is to be admired, and that is more than God hath done to the Angels; he would not do so much to them: But now that God should, not only offer: but send to seek after thee; to cry after you again, and again; to be importunate with you, to entreate, and beseech, not only by his Ministers: but by this own spirit (for there is the work of that) the spirit of God comes and woos, and beseeches sinners to come in and be reconciled) Oh stand and admire at this forever: Let it take up your hearts to give glory to him and the rather if you consider these four things.

First, *What it is that God doth entreate and beseech for?* What is it that you are entreated to do? That char

shal deliver you from the greatest evil that any creature is capable of, and that whereby you would receive the greatest good that any creature is capable of; you are entreated not to be miserable: but to be happy, and not only that you should serve God, and not sin against God, and do the works that God requires of you for his glory: but you are entreated to be reconciled, to deliver your Souls from that depth of misery, and to be brought unto happiness, and glory.

Secondly, *Consider who you are that are intreated.* Were there any great worth in you; Then you might expect to be entreated, as men that are of great estates, they must be entreated: But who are you wretched Caitiffes? in your selves damned Dust and Ashes, fire-brands of hel, such as have made your selves fuel for the everlasting wrath of the eternal God to burne upon; such as deserve to be cast out as an everlasting curse; enemies to God: you are intreated.

And by whom are you intreated? Even by God himself, and Christ that is God blessed for ever. Even that infinite glory before whom Angels adore; before whom they cover their faces: even him, who by one word of his mouth is able to send you al presently down to Hell; even this God commeth to entreat, and that Christ whom Angels do Adore, even that Christ comes to entreate. For the Servant to entreate his Master, for the subject to entreate the prince, is not so much: but for the Master to entreate the Servant, for the prince to entreate the subject, this is that that should fill our Souls with a spirit of admiration, at the unspeakable condescensions of the most blessed Majesty.

Thirdly, *what need hath God of you?* though you should perish, and die eternally, it is no great matter to him; God might have his glory out of your eternal ruine; But to that end that he might break your Hearts, therefore he doth entreate and beseech. Oh admire! at the riches of his Grace, and give him the glory that is due unto

him; begin to do that here that you must do to a eternities when you come into his glorious presence in Heaven;



CHAP. 80.

USE, 2. And 3.

SEcondly, The more God doth manifest this his grace, the more desperately wicked is the heart of men to stand out against God. Oh! wretched, cursed heart that can stand out against God; that can stand out against the offer of grace in the Gospel; I say, this is a cursed heart to stand out against the offer of grace, though it were no more. If this should be but declared, that Christ is come into the world to save sinners: God expects, that all those to whom Christ is so revealed, that they should come flocking unto him, and cry mightily unto God for mercy in Christ: but when God doth not only offer his son; but comes by the Ministry of his word, and by the work of his spirit to draw your hearts unto him, and ye thou dost stand out against God; against all these gracious beginnings, drawings, and melting expressions of God; thou dost stand out; Oh! Cursed stubborn hard heart, that should stand out against all these. Thou canst not now plead; Oh! temptation was strong to draw my heart from God to such and such sinful waies. Was temptation strong? Why did ever temptation draw more alluringly than God hath drawn alluringly by his gospel? It is impossible that the Devil, and all the world should draw more alluringly to any

any sin, than God doth draw unto him. Oh! these entreatings of God this gracious way toward sinners, is that that will be the greatest aggravation of the sins of men that ever was or can be imagined. Only (for the present) know thus much; that the mercies of God, that shall be the subject of the Saints rejoycing, and blessing of his name to all eternity; that mercy will be thy greatest misery, and that is a sad thing for any sinner to think on, that that mercy that the Saints shall be eternally admiring, and blessing God for, that that should be my misery, and secret wound, and my greatest terror, and that is the second thing.

USE. 3.

Oh! rebuke thine own wretched heart, that hath stood out so long against God as thou hast done all thy daies. Certainly the consideration of this; of standing out against any command of God when God comes to enlighten a mans Conscience, and the Soul doth come to understand with whom he hath to deal, it hath a mighty power to break the heart of man. That when I come to see that I have stood out against all those loving drawings, all those wounds of the Gospel, it is that that will rent your hearts; *Rent your hearts and not your garments, for the Lord is merciful;* that is not only a breaking of the heart but a rending of the heart when the Grace of God doth appear to it.

CHAP.

CHAP. 81.

Use. 4. *To strengthen our Faith; if God were reconciled when we were enemies, he will not cast us off for every infirmity. Objections Answered.*

Fourthly, The Consideration of this, may be a mighty strength to the Faith of those sinners that have (in some measure) been wrought upon by the Grace of God. Thus, if the Lord hath manifested such abundance of strength of Spirit in seeking to sinners to be reconciled, then certainly, when sinners are reconciled, the heart of God wil forever be with them; he wil not lose the fruit of such Grace as this; if once he hath brought in, and that in such a way of mercy (Christ having brought it) it cannot be any easie thing that shal take off Gods heart from thee: there was the goodness of God towards *Adam* in *Paradise*. I, (but it was not so much goodness of God unto him, as could not admit of any breach between God and him. But the heart of God is so much in this work in bringing sinners to be reconciled unto him, as it is impossible that ever there should be such a breach between them, and him again; that ever they should prove to be enemies. Therefore let this strengthen thy heart; when at any time thou begin'st to have jealous thoughts of God, have recourse to thy first calling to God. I went on not many years ago in a wretched sinful way; but God came to me, and shewed me my evil way, and shewed me his Grace: Yea, when I stood out against his Grace, he followed me, and would not let me be at quiet, but manifested it more and more, and hath overcome my heart unto himself. How can I think that God that hath done so before,

before, that now he should take advantage upon every infirmity? that now every sin that he sees in me should make such breaches between him and my soul; that he should cast me from him? Can I think it? Certainly it is a wrong to the Grace of God in the Gospel.

Object. I, but you wil say here is the evil, That upon my loose walking I cannot think that ever things were in truth; that I was truly converted.

Answer. To that I answer but these two things. First, that if thou canst but be able to say thus in the presence of God; the Lord knows that there is no weapon of enmity in my heart that is against God; that God reveals unto me to be a sin, but I know my heart is against it; I can appeal to God so, and there is no duty that God requires of me, but I know my heart is with it, if the Lord wil but reveal to me. Now in this case, having before felt the work of God drawing thee to Christ; and if thy heart be thus kept to God: this is one good Argument that certainly God, and thou are not enemies.

Secondly, if thou canst but say thus; there is no Argument that is so prevalent with me to make me not sin as this; for fear of breaking peace between God and me; this is the thing that makes my sin sting my Soul indeed: because by that I come to lose some of that sweetness of the assurance of my peace with God. Canst thou say so? keep thy heart but in such a frame (though thou hast many weaknesses) that thou canst say; whatsoever sin the Lord reveals to me yet my heart is against it, and whatsoever duty the Lord requires of me yet I know my heart is with it, and if there be any thing that I do not know, Oh! that I knew it more, and more, and there is nothing that I fear sin for so much as this; because that I see it breaks the peace between God and my Soul. Is it so with thy poor soul? I pronounce in the name of God Peace be unto thee. Though thy heart be not as thou would'st have it, thou maist

maist conclude this certainly ; God that hath manifested such Grace in drawing thy heart unto himself at the first, wil not cast thee off. Certainly, God had some greater end in working so wonderfully towards thee, than to throw thee off ; except the Lord had some great thoughts of heart in glorifying himself in thee, and to do thee good, he would never have wrought so upon thy heart as he hath done. There are others that live under the light of the Gospel, but the Lord doth never come to their hearts to speak to them as inwardly to draw their hearts, and that by his own Spirit as he hath done to thee, the Lord hath not had so great thoughts of heart to glorifie his name upon them in the day of his Grace, as towards thee in the working of his Grace : So certainly to thee the Lord is about to do great things ; that grace of his that hath been so strong upon thee as it hath been, it wil carry thee through al difficulties. Certainly the Grace of God hath been strong, and it wil be strong and therefore build upon it. If thou hast an hard heart, do not say ; thou hast an hard heart, and therefore Gods heart is not towards thee. No, but rather say, thou hast an hard heart and therefore thou wilt look towards God to break thy hard heart, and bring thy frozen and cold heart to these Beams of Gods Grace, and stand under these Heavenly influences. If thou beest sensible of the hardness of thy heart, and then to sit down sullenly and heavily, and think because of this God wil reject thee ; this is not the way to get thy heart softened : but rather cal to mind what the grace of God hath been towards thee, and how the heart of God is towards sinners to be reconciled unto them, and what he hath done for the like such sinners as thou art, and so keep thy heart under the warme beams of the Gospel, and thereby thou wilt gain a great deal more than sitting down in a sullen way. Those kind of Herbs that grow under the warm Sun grow the better, and the Fruit ripens better than those that grow out of the

the Sunne : So the Heart that can keep it self continually in the Sunne of this mercy and goodness of God, thus expressing himself in the Gospel, willing to be reconciled to sinners ; this heart wil thrive more abundantly, than those that shal ly down fullenly, and discontentedly, This is a mighty encouragement for al sinners to come to be reconciled ; a mighty strong encouragement to them, the Lord invites, and beleeches in the Gospel, and sends his ministers to do it, and requires them that they should do it in his name. What should hinder them, but that any sinner (none excepted) should come, and be reconciled ? We cannot tel who they are that shal not be reconciled, and therefore we may say concerning any particular sinner ; What should hinder thee but that thou shouldest come in to be reconciled ? And if God entreates, and Christ entreates and Ministers entreate, and thou entreatest : What lets thee but that thou maist be reconciled : As, the Eunuch said. *Here is Water enough, why may I not be baptised ? So here is mercy enough, why maist thou not be reconciled ?* Hast thou such thoughts as these are ? See that God is willing to be reconciled to sinners wel, when I get home I am resolved to throw my self before the Lord Christ, and I am able to cry to him for reconciliation, for I am damned and undone for ever else, and and I heare that there is a way to be reconciled to him : wel, this shal be my work now ; I wil set upon it presently, I wil never leave crying to God til I have found Gods Grace comming to me. Art thou resolved upon this ? Wel go on ; and fal down in thy crying to God for mercy ; make this point part of thy petition ; Lord, I have heard that thou art willing to be reconciled ; now Lord here is a wretched sinner comes in to be reconciled to thee what hinders now when both shal entreate ? Suppose two were fallen out one with the other, but now when both sides are wrought upon, and one, he professes himself not only willing, but earnestly desirous to be reconciled

And the other ha cometh, and expresse himselfe too, surely both shew wil agree. Now it is true many times between man and man, their expressions are but very slight, and there is not that at the bottom of their hearts that they expresse with their mouthes. When two are fallen out, and one comes to them, and saith, why, wil you not be at peace with such a man? Oh! yes saith he I am willing. So, come to the other, and he saies the same, he is willing; and yet their hearts are not right (perhapps) one to the other. But now in this case between God and thy poor soul, be confident that on Gods side, it is most real, and do thou but make it out that thy heart is real in desiring after peace with God, and fully understand what thou dost when thou dost desire peace with God, [So] that thou wilt not be at peace with any sin, and desire it fully and then when thou shalt get it, then thy heart shal be praising God, and say, I shal live to the praise of God for ever; and that shal be my endeavor. I would faine have it, but wil God be at peace? Yes, God shal get as much as thou shalt by it, he shal thereby get that that he did especially intend and aime at in making the world. The great designe that God had in making the world was to magnify the riches of his mercy, and if thou beeest one that God hath fastned upon to shew the riches of his mercy, and Grace, he shal get that Glory thereby to his name, that he did most intend when he made the world. Therefore, though thy soul be pretious unto thee, know that Gods Glory is more pretious unto him than thy soul can be to thee, therefore God is more desirous of thy life (with those that shal be saved hereafter) than they can be desirous to be saved themselves; this is a certaine truth, because that God shal get more by the salvation of that soul than the soul shal get. You get something, but God gets much more; now then if God be seeking after that that doth so much concern you, and

and you know this day that Gods heart is more strongly set uppn it than yours, one would think that this should be a mighty encouragement for any sinner to come in to be reconciled. And therefore go on in thy way, let not tentation come take off thy heart (though yet God seems as an enemy to you.) We know that *Josephs* heart was as much towards his bretheren, as his bretherens hearts were towards him; *Joseph* dealt in a rugged way, as if he had been their enemy, yet then was his heart towards them. And so go on in thy way of seeking the Lord, and though God seeme to be as an enemy, yet know that the heart of God is as much towards thee as thy heart can be towards him, and *Christ* looks upon thee as one that he shal get glory to himself by for ever. The good Lord say Amen. It shal be so.



F I N I S.



The first of these is the fact that the
 government has been unable to raise
 the necessary funds to meet its
 obligations. This has led to a
 severe shortage of cash, which
 has in turn caused the government
 to default on its loans. The
 result has been a loss of confidence
 in the government and a sharp
 decline in the value of the
 national currency. This has led to
 a severe economic crisis, with
 unemployment rising and the
 standard of living falling. The
 government has been unable to
 implement any effective measures
 to deal with the crisis, and the
 situation has become increasingly
 desperate. The only way out of
 this crisis is for the government
 to take radical measures to
 reform the economy and to
 restore confidence in the
 government. This will require
 a complete overhaul of the
 government's policies and a
 commitment to transparency and
 accountability. Only then can the
 country begin to recover from the
 crisis and move towards a more
 stable and prosperous future.

2121A

GODS

PRESENT MERCIES

TO HIS

PEOPLE,

Are Arguments of

FUTURE MERCIES.

Preached at Saviers Southwark; May, 2. 1641.

Hosea, 2. 14. And so on,

Behold I wil allure her, and bring her into the
 Wilderneck, and speak comfortably unto
 her, and I wil give her Vnyards from thence,
 and the vally of Achor for a doore of hope, &
 she shal sing there as in the daies of her youth
 and as in the day when she came up out of the
 Land of Egypt; and it shal be at that day
 saith the Lord, that thou shalt cal me Yshi,
 and shalt cal me no more Baali.

His Prophet was sent to the ten Tribes,
 to spoilate Israel; God threatened
 dreadful evils against them, and yet from
 the beginning of this 14. verse to the end
 of the Chapter, maketh Gracious promi-
 ses unto them. I shal only thus promise,
 that the scope of the Holy Ghost here is to shew mercy

to discover the Mercy of God to Apostatizing Israel in a way of conjugal union; that though she had gosse a whoring from God in regard of her idolatrous worship, yet God was contented upon her repentance to take her again, and to marry her unto himself; and therefore al along the Prophet suits himself with such expressions, that signify Gods willingness to marry himself unto her again, in that way as they did use to manifest their conjugal love unto their Spoules, and that being premised will help us to understand many expressions both in the words read, and in the succeeding part of the Chapter, that otherwise would be very obscure to us, and especially that in verse, 14. *I wil allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her*, this may be taken for bringing her into affliction, and then speaking comfortably to her, but that is not the scope of the Holy Ghost here, it was only taken from the way of Marriage, to carry the spouse out of the City into the field that was a heath and a common, and so had the terme of a wilderness, and there rejoycing, and so bringing of her into the City and carrying of her to his Fathers house; and that I might shew out of diverse places of scripture, especially out of the Canticles, *who is this that cometh from the wilderness*, The Holy Ghost taking this allusion from thence, to shew the meaning of this expression is nothing else, but I wil deal graciously with her, as one that marries a spouse, and carries her out of the City into the field, and there rejoyceth with her, and speaks comfortably to her; The main doctrinal conclusion which I intend to go through, shal be raised from these words, *I wil give her the vally of Acher for a doan of bane*, for I shall seeke to move then onle point of Doctrine, raised from those words, *I wil give her the vally of Acher for a doan of bane*. It wil be necessary therefore before I tell you the doctrinal point to open these words unto you, The *vally of Acher*. It was that vally where Acher was killed; the story you may well remembere, that the Holy Ghost here is to shew

of which you may read in the 7 Chapter of the Book of Joshua, and upon that occasion of the troubles that the people of Israel had by *Achan*, this vally was called the vally of *Achor*, for the vally of *Achor* is nothing else but the vally of trouble, *valla tribulationis*, the vally of trouble; so alluding to that name *Achan*. Now it is true that generally, or by very many, these words are carried thus; That God wil so work things about, as to cause the troubles of his people, to be but doors of hope to let in Mercies to them, and there is a truth in that doctrinal point, but not a truth in the grounding of it upon this text, for the meaning of the text is otherwise. The vally of *Achor*. Though the name signify trouble, yet the truth is that this vally of *Achor* was a delightful vally, a very fruitful vally, it was just after the entrance into the Land of *Canaan* that God gave it, and God here doth allude stil to the way of marriage, expressing his love to the ten tribes, that he would receive them again, and marry them unto himself, in that way that they did use to marry amongst the Jews, and the way was this, amongst them, when they did marry any, according to the state of the husband he used to give her gifts; commonly some field or piece of Ground, and if he were a rich man, then a larger piece of ground, or a more fruitful peece of ground, and so according to the height of his condition was his gift, So saith God. I wil give you a vally of *Achor* for a door of hope, as you when you take a spouse to your selves, then you use to indow her with some piece of land, or ground, according to your estate, and that you give to her as a testification of that Love, she is to expect from you for the future. So I wil give you a vally of *Achor*, I wil bestow fresh and choyce mercies upon you for the present, and these mercies shal be in a way of dowrie, as a testification of abundance of future good you shal receive from me; this is the scope and sense of the Holy Ghost in these words. As when God gave the people of *Israel* the land of *Canaan*; he gave them

them this Valley of *Achor* as the entrance at the door of Hope unto that Mercy, that they should enjoy from him in the Land of *Canaan*. That this Valley of *Achor* was a delightful fruitful Valley, it appears evidently from that Text in *Esa. 65. 10.* *And Sharon shall be a Field of flocks, and the Valley of Achor a place for the Herds to lie down in, for my people that have sought me:* Here God promises the Valley of *Achor* as a blessing to the people that did seek him, and the Herds should lie down in it, it was a very fruitful place, and therefore God maketh such a promise; Now though it hath the name of trouble, yet we find that God promiseth it to his people as a token of his Mercy, and so it is to be understood in these words, therefore having the meaning of it, now we come to the Doctrinal Conclusion, that is to be grounded upon this Scripture thus opened unto you; the Doctrine then is this.

Doct. *That the Mercies that God bestows upon his Church and his people, are doors of hope to future Mercies*

Present Mercies that God grants unto his people, are doors of hope to future Mercies; All Gods Mercies to his Saints are inlets unto further Mercies. This is the high privilege of the Saints of God, it belongs not to every one. The wicked indeed when they receive any thing from God, they may write their *Ne plus ultra* upon it, this is like to be their **PORTION**, and they may wonder that they have any thing at all; but the Mercies of God unto his people may be all called doors of hope; the name of *Joseph* may be written upon them: as we may read in *Genesis 30. 24.* *When Rachel had once conceived, and did bear a Son, Jacob called his name Joseph, and said, The Lord shall add another; when she had one she made it a pledge of another, the Lord shall another.* So it is with Gods mercies to his people, they are *Josephs*,
they

may conclude, that God shal add another; when God delivered his people out of Egypt, Exod. 13. 15. saith Moses, *Thou hast guided them unto thy holy habitation; thou hast guided them, that deliverance Moses tooke as a certain Argument of Gods further Mercy toward them; thou hast guided them.* When God did but begin with David in 2 Sam. 5. 12. to shew but a little Mercy, an outward Mercy to him, David did conclude that God had established him in the Kingdome. How so? God had shewed a great favor outwardly unto David, and David could conclude, that that favor he did receive, was but an inler unto more, an argument of establishment of him in his Kingdome; God hath delivered, and he wil deliver (saith the Apostle.) As God maketh way in his wrath by lesser judgements upon the wicked, in Psal. 78. 45. so God maketh way for his Mercy, by present lesser Mercies unto his Children.

But now in the prosecution of this point, we shal discover to you,

1. *The Reasons of it how this cometh to pass.*
2. *We shal answer a question about Gods interruption of his Mercies.*
3. *Discover unto you how we shal come to know, when Gods present Mercies are but preparations unto future Mercies, what kinds of Mercies those are, and how to be known, that are but inlets unto other Mercies. And then.*
4. *Come to the Uses of the Doctrine; that Gods Mercies to his people are but inlets unto greater.*

Reason. 1.

That cometh hence, because of the fulness of mercy that is in God, there is such an infinite Ocean, and stream, and treasure of Mercy in the Lord, that hence it is that when it cometh and beginneth to run unto the Saints, to the people of God, that the beginnings of it are but preparations, to let out more; the Scripture saith that God doth delight in mercy, in *Micah* 7. 18. now that that a man delighteth in, if he once begin, that that he doth is but to draw on more; Gods Mercies are called his *Riches*, God is rich in Mercy; the Wildome of God, the Power of God, and the Justice of God are not called Gods Riches, they are called his Glory, I will make my Glory to passe by, and God proclaims his Mercy; now then because the Mercies of God are his delight, his Riches, his Glory, when he hath fit subjects to let out these upon, when he beginneth once to let them out, these beginnings are Testimonies of a Fountain that is to be communicated.

Reason. 2.

All Gods Mercies to his people they come out of love, *Amor nescit nimium*; Love knows not too much, it knows not any such expression as too much, there is nothing too much for Love, Love it must not be limited, if Love begin to be shewn, that that cometh out of Love will have no bounds; Now all the goodnesse that God shews to his people, it cometh out of Love, out of infinite Love, and therefore one Fruit of goodnesse is but a drawing on of another; Indeed when Gods goodnesse cometh out of *general bounty*, then it is in another manner, it stops soon, but when it cometh out of *intire Love*, the infinite Love of God, it stopperh not. But Thirdly, There is another Argument that added to these two maketh it strong indeed, and that is.

Reason.

Reason. 3.

That the goodness of God unto his people is a fruit of the covenant; it cometh not only out of love, but it cometh unto them as the fruit of an everlasting covenant that God hath made with them, a sure covenant; now in the covenant of grace that God hath made with his people, there is a connection of all mercies a concatenation of all the goodness of God there, the treasure of mercy is in the covenant, and an exceeding strength of mercy in the covenant, to bear down all hindrances and oppositions, there mercy is tied unto them by truth, and as we read of the covenant between *Jonathan* and *David*, in *1 Sam*, 20, 15. That *David* made a covenant with *Jonathan*, that he would never cut off his loving kindness from him, nor from his house after him; such a covenant hath God made with all his people, that he will never cut off his loving kindness from them; he hath made no such covenant with the wicked, no, God may shew them some favour for the present, yet he hath not made a covenant that he will never cut off his mercy from them; you may have abundance of favours this day, but you may have them eternally cut off from you, but the saints of God are in such a blessed condition, as God doth not only shew them mercy for the present, but he hath made a covenant with them never to cut off his loving kindness from them and upon this covenant though there be many weaknesses and many distempers in them frailties and infirmities, yet God will never cut off his loving kindness from them;

Reason. 4.

Because that the Goodness of God to his people, as it cometh from an eternal fountain, so it is let out for the accomplishments of eternal ends; Gods intentions in his

Goodness to his saints, it is to raise up to himselfe an eternal name of praise and honor in the world, and not only here, but in heaven, in the highest heavens eternally, that is Gods scope not only in some mercies, but observe it in every mercy that God bestowes upon a saint, upon his children, (I say) every mercy every outward mercy God hath this end in it, to raise up himselfe a name of eternal praise by it, and therefore despise no mercy though it be never so little, for Gods end in the least mercy thou hast, in every crum of bread thou eatest, it is to raise up himselfe an eternal name of praise, even from that mercy, but take the greatest mercy that God bestowes upon the veriest worldling through his general bounny, God hath not such an end in it as he hath in this? God may take notice of them for a while, and there is an end of them, but in his Goodness towards his people, there God intendeth a glorious edifice, to raise up a building that shal be to his eternal praise, and therefore when as one layeth a stone to raise up a high building, he laies it so as he fitteth it for another stone to be laid upon it, if I lay some ruins of a building, but only a heap of stones, I care not how I lay them, but if I intende to raise up a building, then I lay one stone as it may prepare for another; So doth God in his dealing with the wicked, he heaps his mercies upon them, let them come as they wil, but when he dispenseth his mercy to his people, then he intendeth a building, and he laies them in that order, and in that ranke, first one and then another, so as when he hath laid one, if we understand what that mercy is, one may see an empression in that mercy for another, as it were caling for another mercy to be laid upon it. These are the special grounds why Gods mercies to his people, are but preparations for further and further mercies; but because I would not be hindered (especially in the close of this) I wil pass by any thing that may be further spoken concerning the grounds.

Obj. But you wil say we see it otherwise, and we find it otherwise, that there are usually interruptions in Gods mercies even to his peopel, when God cometh to deal in a way of mercy to his Church, he goes a little way and then he stoppeth, and then there cometh heavy Judgments after them heavy afflictions presently.

Ans. Now for the answering of that.

1. We are to know that we must of necessity grant, that there may besome interruptions for the present in Gods mercies to his people, but there is a difference between interruption and cutting off, it may seem for the present to be interrupted, but it runs under ground still, and hath it's course, as they say there is a river that runs fifty miles under the ground, and there cometh up again, so it may be with Gods mercies towards his people, though they see them not. His Children have their portions in his Judgments, many times God cometh in a Judgement, and then he lets the wicked prosper, I but his Justice hath it's course under ground, and runs out of sight, and comes up again, that is very observable and may concerne our present occasion, for our instruction in Gods dealing with his peopel, in bringing of them out off captivity, and repairing the wal and the Temple, God had made many glorious promises to his people, what he would do for them, in returning them from captivity, and building of their city again, wel, after the seventy yeares came, God did begin to worke wonderfully gloriously for them, but if you observe a little and read the story you may finde that between their beginning to returne from the captivity and the finishing of Gods

Gods mercy in building the Temple and the wal, they were as long a time as they were in their captivity, That was seventy years, they were seenty years in captivity, and from the beginning of the worke of their restoring to the end of it, they were seventy years more, but stil the goodnes of God ran along, there was an eye of mercy and goodnes upon them, though it seemed to cease for the present, yet it caried it through at the last. It may much concerne us now we are ready to be discontented and troubled, when God is in a way of reformation, because we have not al presently, al is not come now just when we would have it we are ready to complain, Q! How long hath the parliament bin set and litle hath bin done, why? it was Gods way with his own people, though they had such particular promises of that glorious deliverance, yet it was seventy years before it was fully accomplished, and if God be but in a way of mercy towards us, but a going on, you have but a little now now and a little another time, yet we are not to repine at this, for stil mercy is going on, though there may be interruption for the present. But further.

2. Many times we thinke there is an interruption, when indeed there is none at al, but our mistake, if we did but understand things, we should see a most beautiful concatenation of mercyes and connection of mercies there is no interruption; yea further,

3. The very interruption that we think there is, may be one of our greatest mercies; Gods ceasing in communicating one kind of mercy, may be but a preperation for another kind of mercy, for a greater mercy, and therefore we are not to be discouraged.

4. We are to consider, that though this be the goodnes of God to his people, yet he doth expect that his people should go on with him in the way of his goodnes, should close with him in the way of his mercy, or otherwise there may be a great interruption for the present, in *Hosea*. 7. 1. God complaineth ther eof his people,

people, saith he, *when I would have healed Israel, then the iniquity of Ephraim was discovered*, when I would have healed them, God manytimes is in a way just of healing his people, and when he would have healed them when he is in a way of mercy, and he expects that they should follow him in this way of Mercy, why, then their iniquity is discovered, and then they break out into notorious iniquities, and sins, and they come and make a stop, and shut the door of mercy against them, so that (I say) as we are to be warned in regard of our publique sins, now God is in a gracious way of publique mercies, there was never a time wherein we had need of more warning to be watchful, to take heed what we do, that our iniquity may not be discovered, for now God is about to heal us, he is thinking to heal us, Oh I let us now take heed of our lives, and so it should be particularly the care of every soul. Is God about to heale, is God in a way of mercy to thy family, to thy body, to thy soul at any time? now take heed to thy selfe, that thy iniquity be not discovered, for now wil the devil come, and tempt thee to break out in some notorious sin, that he might cut off the way of Gods Grace, that he might shut that door of mercy that God is now opening to thee; in *Zacharie* 8 15. 16. Saith God there, So again have I thought in these daies to do wel unto Jerusalem, and to the house of Judah, feare you not, (mark you what follows) and let none of you imagine evil in your hearts against his neighbour, and love no fallie oathes, for al these things are the things that I hate saith the Lord, mark the expression of God, it doth very nearly concerne us, now we may wel apply that 15. verse unto the condition of England at this time, I thought in these daies to do wel unto this people, and to the house of Judah, but in these things that I should do (saith God) look to your selves, you must not think that when I am going on in a way of mercy, you may do what you list, but these things I wil do but it is
upon

upon this condition, that you follow God on in that way, if God doth open a door to us, if we would not have it shut, he expects that we should come and enter in at that door, that is, close with him in that way of mercy he is doing; wel, but then seeing that our sins have made the interruption, and it is not alwaies that Gods present mercies are certain arguments of further mercies.

How shal we know when we may draw an argument, to assure our selves from that mercy we have now, that there is further mercies intended for us? This you may remember in the beginning of the point, I told you it was a priviledge of Gods saints, and yet every one wil be ready to snatch at it, & to conclude to themselves, wel, God is a God full of mercy and therefore because he beginneth to shew mercy to me, he wil go on, surely I shal find favor, it hath been his way and course to deal thus with his people and therefore seeing he hath delivered me from one evil, he wil deliver me from another.

(Bretheren) it is the usual way of wicked men to catch at the priviledges of the Saints, as if they were their own, we have a notable example for this in the prophesie of Jeremiah, that is worthy of our observation, in Jer. 21. 2. It is an example there of *Zedekiah*, Zedekiah was a wicked man, and yet he flattered himself in this, and promised to himself, that what priviledges the people of God had in former times, he must needs have the like, mark what he saith now; *Inquire I pray thee of the Lord for us, Nebuchad-nezar King of Babilon, maketh war against us, if so be the Lord wil deal with us according to al his wondrous works that be may go up from us, Mark (saith Zedekiah to Jeremiah) Oh! inquire, Oh! let us know the mind of God, whether he wil deal with us according to al his wondrous works; God had dealt with his people according to his wonderful*

wonderful works had dealt wonderfully for his people, and Zedekiah a wicked man, and the wicked people that were with him, they were ready to flatter themselves with hope, that God would deal with them as he had done with his people heretofore, wonderfully, but they were deceived. And so people when they heare of a priviledg of the Saints, for them to promise to themselves, that they shal have the like from God, that his people have (I say) they wil be mistaken, for the promises that are made in Scripture of Mercy, they are the inheritance of Gods Saints, *Isa. 54. 17. This is the inheritance of my servants* (saith God.) When God made a promise to his people of Mercy there, I but (saith he) *this is the inheritance of my Sarvants*, it belongs not to al, it is their inheritance, their portion; what have others to do with the inheritance of Gods people? When a Saint of God looks into the word of God, and reads the word, he may see every promise, every expression of Gods goodness, as a part of his inheritance, and take it, it is thy inheritance, though thou inheritest not worldly riches, thou mayest have short or little comings in, yet know thou art an heir of al the glorious promises that are written in the Book of God, they are thy inheritance. A wicked man when he reades in the Scripture, he can take no such delight in it: for indeed he may reade many promises, but they are none of his inheritance, they are the inheritance of Gods people. There is a great deal of difference between an heire riding through his Fathers ground, and a strangers riding through it: just the like difference there is between a carnal man reading the scriptures, & a Saint: An heir rideth through his ground and seeth fruitful fields, and pleasant meadows, and saith he, this is my ground, and a stranger rideth through them and commendeth them, I, but they belong not to me. So a Saint reades the scripture, and the expressions of Gods goodness there and saith they are my inheritance and a carnal heart saith no such matter; and therefore

Gods Mercies to his people are inlets to further, if they are not so to thee thou canst not conclude and say, Oh! I was in such a danger, and in such an extremity and God delivered me from that extremity, and therefore if I come into the like he wil deliver me again, no, thou canst not say so. It was a notable expreffion of *Hezekiab, Isa. 38.* When God there delivered him, from the sickness, as its thought by Divines it was the Plague, and God delivered him, he concludes, *In love to my soul hath thou delivered me from the pit of corruption;* this is an excellent couclufion that a child of God may make, if ever he were delivered from the danger of the Plague; in love to my soul (Lord) thou hast delivered me, and I shal go to the house of the Lord, I shal yet have further mercy; It may be some of you have had the the Plague in your houses, it may be upon your selves, and God hath delivered you, and you wil take it as an argument that God wil deliver you again, because he delivered you from that: yea, but unless thou be a *Hezekiab*, a Gracious man or woman, thou canst not conclude that God hath delivered thee from that pit of corruption, for Gods preservations of wicked men, are many times reservations for greater evils; as I might shew you but that I see that I must hasten.

Wel, but then stil how may we know, when we may draw an argument from Gods present mercies to future.

The first discovery whether Gods present Mercies be in-lets to future.

When in a mercy there is some special discovery of God unto his people,](I say) some special and glorious discovery of God in a Mercy, As in his Mercy to Abraham,

ham, Isaak, Jacob, Solomon, David, &c. There were glorious discoveries of Gods presence, when as Jacob was delivered from *Esau*, saith Jacob, *I have seen thee as the face of God*, it may be read thus, *I have seen thee after the face of God*, after I have seen the face of God I have seen thee; I, that is sweet and comfortable indeed, when we can see a mercy after we have seen the face of God; we can see the face of God in the way of his Mercy, and after we see the face of God, then look upon the Mercy, and then gather this argument, If thou hast an eye that in a Mercy thou canst see the face of God there, and after the sight of the face of God in the mercy, then it is somewhat. Thus in *Isay*, 26. 12. *Lord thou wilt ordain peace for us*, [thou wilt,] *for thou also hast wrought al our works in us*, mark the argument, Lord, thou wilt ordain peace, Why? For thou hast wrought al our works in us: This scripture is spoken concerning the deliverance of the people of *Israel* from their captivity, God did begin to deliver them, and those that were Godly were sure to have deliverance complete, *Thou wilt ordain*, we are sure of that (say they) why? for thou hast wrought al our works for us, for it is not *Cyrus*, But it is a remarkable hand of God upon the spirit of *Cyrus*, and al that is done in our deliverance, it is done through a mighty hand of God; [Thou hast wrought al our works in us;] The work it is a work above Nature, it is a wonderful work of God, and therefore we are sure that thou wilt ordain peace for us; When God appears wonderful remarkably in a Mercy to his people, then they conclude of further Mercies: A most excellent place for that likewise in *Psal.* 75. 5. *Unto thee (Oh God) do we give thanks, for that thy name is neare thy wonderful works declare*, mark, [for that thy name is near thy wonderful works declare,] Oh Lord! (as if they should have said) we see thy wonderful works, we see thy face, thy Power, thy Glory, thy Mercy, and thy Goodness; we see thy Mercy a creating Mercy and there-

fore thy name is near, O! thou art good yet more and more, for that thy wondrous works declare. Brethren, when Gods mercies are creating mercies, then we may expect that they will be perfect mercies, for though in generation there may be a defect, yet in creation there is never a defect: many times there may want a Limb, a member in generation, but al that God creates, he creates perfect: Now when the mercies of God are as it were created mercies, not generated out of second causes, but we see a kind of created power, then surely it will be perfect. Now (Brethren) before we come to Application to our own hearts, we cannot but apply this as a strong argument to raise up our thoughts, to make account of the mercies this day we enjoy, to be a door of Hope unto us; for if ever people have created mercies we have; if ever a people could see the face of God in a way of mercy, then we may at this day; if ever a people could say, Thou (Oh Lord) hast wrought al our works for us, we may wel say it: and therefore we may draw that conclusion that the Church did, Thou wilt ordain peace, for thou hast wrought al our works for us. Surely (Brethren) Gods name is nigh, God hath seemed to be as far off from England for a long time, God is coming nigh, his name is nigh, for his wondrous works that he hath done of late declare it. But that is the first.

The Second discovery whether Gods present Mercies be in-lets to future Mercies.

When Gods Mercies are Spiritual Mercies, then they are certain in-lets to further Mercies. a Spiritual Mercie never come alone, but make way for further. I wil give you but one Text for that, because I see time outruns me, in Ezek: 39. 29. Neither wil I hide my face any more from them (saith God) Why? For I have poured out my Spirit upon the House of Israel,
saith

Saith the Lord God ; Mark, I wil hide my face no more from them, Why ? for I have poured out my Spirit upon the House of Israel, *saith the Lord God.* Brethren, if ever any Nation had the Spirit of God poured out upon them, certainly we have ; God poureth out his Spirit unto his people, upon private Christians, and upon Ministers in a wonderful abundant manner, and how hath he poured out his Spirit upon our Worthies assembled in Parliament ? Now let this be a good Argument, neither wil I hide my face any more from them, for I have poured out my spirit upon them ; then it is an Argument for us this day that God wil not hide his face from us, because he hath poured out his Spirit upon us ; If there be any people under Heaven that have the Spirit of God upon them, certainly the people of *England* have it at this day, and this is Gods own promise and Argument, you may plead it with God in prayer, that he wil never hide his face from them, that he hath poured out his Spirit upon, not only in general may you make use of it, but for your selves in particular. Hath God poured out his Spirit upon any of your Souls ? you may make this conclusion, it is Gods own conclusion, he wil never hide his face from you, because he hath poured his Spirit upon you ; that is the Second,

The Third discovery whether Gods present Mercies be in-lets to future Mercies.

Then is a Mercy a fore-runner of further Mercy, *when it is obtained by Faith and prayer in the Covenant of Grace ; That Mercy that prayer and the exercise of Faith doth obtain, is certainly and infallibly, a fore-runner of further Mercy.* God hath not done with that people, and that Soul in a way of Mercy, where he bestows a Mercy as a fruit of prayer, an exercise of Faith in the Covenant ; If prayer be the Key to open Heaven when it is shut to us, much more then wil it keep Heaven open

open when it is once open, but that we know to be the excellency of prayer, it is the great Key of Heaven that golden Key of Heaven that opens it when it is shut, then surely prayer can keep Heaven open; If ever a Mercy were obtained by prayer, certainly that Mercy that we have now for the present here in *Edgland*, is a Mercy obtained by prayer, if ever there were a Parliament obtained by prayer since *England* was a Nation, certainly this Parliament was; we may call the name of this Parliament *Samuel*, asked of God, and what have been the earnest cries of Gods people, of many that are dead and gone, but for these times: Now that that is a fruit not only of prayer of Gods people for the present, but is the Harvest of so many prayers of the Saints of God, and Worthies of God in former ages that are now gone, and their Souls are triumphing in Heaven, (I say) that that is the Harvest of all their prayers, surely cannot be one single Mercy, but is a Mercy to let in others, it is a Mercy that is a door of hope to further Mercies; and that is the Third Note. Again Fourthly, a Fourth Note of a Mercy that is a making way to further Mercies, is this,

The Fourth Discovery whether Gods present Mercies be in-lets to future Mercies.

That Mercy that leads us to the God of Mercy, is certainly an inlet to further Mercies; whatsoever it is that leads our Souls to the God of Mercy, we may conclude that this Mercy will bring abundant good with it: I must not build upon divers Scriptures, only read that of *David*, in 2 *Sam.* 7. the whole Chapter you may read at your leisure, how Gods Mercy to him lead him to the God of Mercy, upon which there was such a promise of continuance of Mercy for so long a time.

The fifth Discovery whether Gods present Mercies be in-lets of future Mercies.

That Mercy (I beseech you observe it) that is to a Soul, to a people an engagement to duty, is certainly a door of more Mercy; whatsoever Mercy God bestows upon you in particular, or upon a Nation, if the Mercy be made an engagement to Duty, certainly it is a door to more Mercy; take it thus: As so we may, when we do account our duties to be Mercies, then our duties will hold: to when Gods Mercies are turned into duties, then Gods Mercies will hold; it is a most infallible sign of one that will persevere in duty, that will never fail. If thou wouldest know whether thou art like to persevere in duty or no, O! I am afraid I shal fall off, (I say some) O! if I were sure that I should persevere to the end, it would comfort me, Would you have an infallible sign that your duties will hold to the end? take this for one, If thy Soul looke upon every duty as a Mercy to thee, every command to a duty as Gods Mercy to thee every day, thus I dare pawn my soul that soul will persevere: so far as any soul shal account a duty to be a Mercy, so far that soul shal persevere. As it is a certain Evidence of perseverance in duty, when a duty is accounted a Mercy: so (I say) it is a certain Evidence that there will be a perseverance in Mercy, when Mercy is turned into duty; when Mercy shal be an engagement to duty, and turns into duty, then it is a certain sign there will be a perseverance in mercy; as when duty is accounted mercy, there will be a perseverance in duty. Again another may be this.

The Sixth discovery whether Gods present mercies be in-lets to future mercies.

That mercy that humbleth the heart, that mercy is an in-let to further mercy; And it is very observable that place in Sam. 2, 7. you may read that Chapter in

two or three several places, when God had promised to *David* great things; marke you, *David*s spirit was as low then, never lower, *what am I?* saith *David*; and *David* cries out, *Thou art great, O Lord!* he crieth not out thou hast made me great, but thou art great, O Lord! and in the 26. verse. *Let thy name be magnified for ever*; he was low in his own spirit; *What am I?* but let thy name be magnified for ever; *David*s heart was not taken up about this, Oh! God hath promised to me a perpetual Kingdome unto my posterity, and now I am great, and God hath magnified me, no, but what am I? and let thy name be magnified, and be thou great, O Lord. When this shal be the frame of a soule, of a people, when God advanceth them in a way of Mercy, and they cry out, Oh! let me be low, and be any thing so Gods name be magnified, certainly this Mercy is a fore-runner of further mercy. As it is a great argument of the strength of faith, and acceptable to God, when as in one adversity, when God seems to come out against him, that a guilty heart can beleieve, and the heart can be raised, and not sinke in the depth of adversity; I beseech you observe it, as when the heart can rise in the depth of adversity, it is a stronge argument that there is an enduring faith, and a pretious faith: so when the heart can fal in the height of prosperity, and be low, there is abundance of grace in that soul acceptable to God, and God intendeth much good to it;

The seventh discovery Whether Gods present mercies be in-lets to future mercies.

When as we are careful to consecrate the first fruits of our Mercies to God, when the first fruits of the good we do receive, are ever consecrated to God, then it is but an inlet of further Mercies; for so it was here. This vally of Achan you know it was by Jerico as an evidence unto them that they should have al the Land of Canaan,

now

now what did they at Jericho? they did devote al to God, the whole City to God with the suburbs of it were devoted to God. they consecrated the first fruites of Canaan at their entering into Canaan, where Jericho was, and this valey of Acon was just by it; when God did begin to give them possession of that good land, they did devote the first fruites to God, and so it became an evidence to them, that they should possesse the Good land afterwards; So when God beginneth in a way of mercy and goodnes, then if a people, or family, or particular man or woman, beginneth to devote that first fruit of mercy to God, it is evident it is a doore of hope of further Mercy. Thus I have done with the explication, I am sorry I have no more time for the application, I will passe over things as briefly as I can, at is the last of all I most intend. for the First therefore.

U.S.E. I. I have sayd thus, women have had still yett no more comfort but death and to If this be so that Gods Mercies, and even present Mercies are tokens to future, when God is in a way of Mercy, then his people may expect greater to follow, hence follows this consequence upon it that therefore those men and women that are only careful to seeke God in time of affliction, are much mistaken, and it is a vile wretched folly for any to thinke, that this is the only time to seeke God, the time of affliction, that is confuted from this point, thus, for if when God is in a way of mercy, then Gods people they argue that more mercy is coming, then this follows, that when God is in a way of mercy, then it is a fit time to pray to him, that is the fittest time to pray to him, when God is in a way of goodnes and Mercy to them, when Mercy is coming, then it is a time for thee to be praying; But now the case is quite cross in the world, they will pray to God indeed, when? when God hath them at the advantage, in a time of sickness and affliction, and upon their death beds, when Gods

justice is out against them, and Gods wrath upon them, and they see themselves plunging into the bottomless gulfe, then they wil pray and cry for mercy, Oh! thou shewest thy selfe to be a stranger to the waies of God, and to the minde of God, and to the covenant of God, if thou wert one of Gods people, then thou wouldest know that when God is in a way of Mercy, then is the best time of praying, for the Mercy less in another, and then is the best time of praying; I would argue thus, Is it more likely that God when the day of his patience and longe suffering continues to thee, that then he should deny thee mercy? (I say) is it like he should deny thee mercy then? and yet when the day of his wrath and justice cometh, then he should bestow Mercy upon thee, what an absurd apprehension of things is here? Thou criest God wil deny thee Mercy and grace now, & now is the day of his long-suffering & patience, and wil he deny it now, and yet is he like to give it thee, when the day of his wrath and justice cometh, upon thy sick bed, and death bed, that may be the day of vengeance & of wrath, If thou hast wisdom to thy soul seeke God whilst Mercy is coming, and while he is in a way of Mercy that is the fittest time to pray, and therefore take it this day and be convinced you carnal hearts that have no minde to pray, but when they are in their afflictions: but these hearts are most spiritual, that can pray most when God is coming most in mercy to them, but the time of affliction is the most unlikely time of getting any thing from God, I had thought to have spoken divers things about that.

USE. 2.

If this be so when God is in a way of mercy, one mercy wil let out another, hence all the Saints of God are taught and admonished to observe, and take diligent notice of the continuation of Gods mercies towards them, for certainly

tainly this is Gods way to them, one mercy maketh way for another, and if thou belongest to God, that hath been his way to thee, all thy life time even from his Electing thee; only now it is thy duty to be observant, how God hath made one mercy a door of hope to another mercy, and it is a special work to observe Gods waies towards a Christian, a special work of the Sabbath, many of you (especially you that are not book-learned) you say you know not how to spend the Sabbath after the publique exercise is done, but must walk up and down the streets &c. here is a work for them that are not book-learned to spend the Sabbath in; If thou beest godly, then sometimes every Sabbath recollect all the waies of Gods merciful providence towards thee, ever since thy Youth and Childhood, and how one hath had a connexion to another, how one mercy hath let in another mercy, and that lets in a third, and that third a fourth, and you shal see how the track of Gods goodness hath been towards you al your daies, and that will be a most sweet meditation for you, wherein God shal have a great deal of Glory; the 92. *Psalme* is a *Psalme* appointed for the Sabbath, and you shal find that it is a *Psalme* of contemplation of the works of God, and the waies of Gods mercies towards his people; it is a special way to understand the connexion of things, and the connexion of causes, how one cause hath dependance upon another cause, and that upon another, and that upon another, and this is the difference between Sense and Reason, the bruit Beasts that have only Sense, they taste the sweetness of a thing, but they never enquire after the cause, but now the more rational any man is, the more desires kindle in him to find out the connexion of causes. If this be a sweet thing to a soul in a natural way, to find out the connexion of causes. O! how sweet is it to a gracious soul, to find out the connexion and concatenation of al the mercies, and goodneses of the Lord towards him, in al the passages of his life; and do it the rather because that the truth is (Brethren) this

that I am speaking of now, it is that wherein a principal part of the glorious inheritance of the Saints consisteth in the glory of Heaven, wherein the happiness of the glorified souls there shal consist, it will be this, that eternal Sabbath that shal be spent in Heaven wil amongst other things be spent in this work that I am speaking of, in a contemplation of al the connexion and concatenation of Gods merces towards those that are now in Heaven. Now they have been connected and concatenated ever since they have had a being, and so brought up to that height of glory, Oh! what an infinite content the Saints shal have when God shal reveal al, when they shal see into the counsels of God, and the wil of God so freely and into al his waies, how they were chosen from al eternity and so to eternity, and there they shal see every passage of Providence that they did not understand the meaning of before, how it made way to such a mercy and that to another, and that to another, and so til they were brought to that fulness of glory; they shal (I say) be eternally contemplating thus of the connexion of Gods mercies, and praising and blessing of God, that did thus work and coennex things together for their good; If thou hopest to come to Heaven, to be thus excercised, to give God glory there, Oh! begin this work here for we pray Gods wil may be done on earth now, as it is done in Heaven. As on the contrary, it will be a great part of the torment of the damned, that they shal there see how one work of Justice made way for another, how one passage of Gods Providence made way to one Judgment, and that to another, and that to another, and so til they were plunged into the bottomless pit for ever, and the very sight how God wrought from one to another, wil be torment enough to them; Wel, that is the Second, to consider of the connexion of Gods mercies. A Third Use of the Point is this.

USE. 3.

If this be so hence we are taught to entertain every
mercy

mercy of God kindly, and to make much of al Gods mercies, if we belong to God, every mercy comes but as a Messenger of further mercy, Oh! entertain it wel, entertain it kindly, embrace it, make good use of it; Indeed when the Prophet *Elisha* knew the Messenger of the King came to do mischief to him, he bids them entertain him roughly at the door, hardly at the door, but (Brethren) every mercy that cometh to us if we be godly, it cometh as a Messenger of good tidings, it cometh to bring more mercy with it, and therefore let us entertain it kindly at the door, let us entertain it kindly, for certainly it wil make way for further mercy; that shal be the Third. And then the fourth is this.

USE 4 *that we shal be so to*

The consideration of this point may cause abundance of humiliation to our hearts, cause exceeding sad thoughts, if this be so that one mercy of God makes way to another, one mercy if it be sanctified, and have the blessing of God with it, it is a door of hope to another, hence when we look backwards to these waies of Gods mercies, that have been heretofore towards us, and look to the oppertunities that we have had of obtaining further mercy from God, and consider how we have lost them, when God was in a way with us, Oh! that should draw tears of blood from us, look back to thy life. I suppose there is never one in this congregation, but in looking back to the waies of Gods providence to them, they cannot but cry, Oh! the Lord was once in a way of mercy to me, there was a time that certainly God was merciful to me, Nay, not only in outward mercies, such and such deliverances I had at such a time, Oh! had I followed those mercies, What might I have gotten when I was crying to God for deliverance, God heard me, God hath delivered me, delivered my family, now God (as it were) was in a way of mercy to me,

Oh!

O! had I followed that then, what might I have gotten? but I neglected the opportunity, I lost it, and now God is in another way with me, but especially when you look back to the opportunities that you have had for the good of your souls, hath not God many times bin in a way of mercy to your souls? Oh! was not there such a time when you began to have frequent workings of Gods spirit in you? you began to have light darts into your Conscience, to have the spirit of God drawing your hearts, that when you came to the word, you found the word coming with power, and the spirit of God sealing it, and your hearts did begin to yeild, and to melt before God, Oh! what might you have gotten if you had gone on, if you had followed God in those convictions of conscience, and in those beginnings of troubles you had, and workings of Gods spirit, what might you have come to now? There was a door of hope, but foolcs and wretched men to stick in the birth and come not forth; and alas! May not many say, Oh! that I had a door of hope, there was such a mercy of God towards me, but wo to me the door is shut, I find my heart shut up, and my conscience shut up, and my heart now is hard, but it was beginning to be softened? but Oh! how hard it is now, God was opening my heart, but now it is otherwise with me, and for ought I know God is gone, and Christ is gone? I had a day, if I had knowen it, Oh! it had been happy for many in this place, if they had at such a time followed God, when he was in a way of Mercy. If (it may be) when God was in a way of mercy to thee, thou haddest had a heart to go into thy closet, and there cried to God to follow on that Good work that he had begun, and to make it effectual to thee, this had been a gracious work to thy soul, but thou wentest away into thy shop, into thy calling, perhaps into the Tavern or Alehouse, to thy gaming, to thy company, and so neglectedst the day of Grace, there was a door of hope, but there was another door thou haddest a mind rather to follow

follow, than to follow God in the way of mercy, I wil not say that there is no door of hope for thee, for there may be a door of hope, but this I wil say, that thy condition is a lamentable and most greivous condition, and thou haddest need look to it, for this consideration sinketh the hearts of men and women afterwards ; If thou shouldest come to thy sick bed, or death bed, perhaps thy conscience wil preach that to thee that now I am preaching to thee, and then thy conscience wil give answer, it is true there was a door of hope opened to me, and then if any Minister come to offer Mercy, I (you wil say) it is for those that havea time of Mercy, but God did open my heart, and I did shut my heart against him, and these thoughts and conclusions are the despairing and sinking thoughts of men and women upon their sick beds, and if God never had been coming towards me, there might have been some hope, but what hope is there now for me? Oh! take heed for time to come, any of you, if God be coming in a way of Mercy if this day by the word at this time he begin to open any of your hearts labor to follow him, to go in at this door of hope. We that is the fourth; again fifthly from this point learn this

this point that I have this day been preaching to thee, then use it as an argument to uphold thy heart. It is true affliction cometh after another, and one affliction maketh way for another, and hath not one mercy come after another too, and hath not one mercy made way for another too? I am sure I have had mercies thick and three fold, and one hath made way for another, and though I have new afflictions making way one for another, yet let me bear them, considering how long a time I have had mercies making way one for another, yet further in the next place, the fifth Use of this may be of great consequence too.

SIX. And there about 60 millions are the despairs of life; and making thoughts of men and women upon their

That if this be the way of God towards his people, that one mercy shall make way for another, then it should be the way of the people of God towards him again, that one duty should make way for another duty; there is a great deal of reason for it, if God be thus gracious to us, that one mercy maketh way for another; then we should be so thankful to him, that one duty of ours should make way for another duty, and this (brethren) is a most excellent thing, that one duty maketh way for another duty; as I told Hyaul before, when a duty is accounted a mercy, then it will certainly persevere, and so take this second note of persevering coming in here, when one duty shall make way for another duty, certainly that soul will persevere in Duty. But here is the difference between that which is done by the strength of a natural conscience, and that which is done out of a principle of true justifying Grace; I beseech you observe it. There are many that suppose are much troubled in this case of conscience; they say, that one that hath but the strength of a natural conscience may performe duty out of the strength of a natural conscience how can I know then when I performe duty out of a grad

CIOUS

cious principle, a principle of sanctifying Grace, and that my duties are not out of the strength of natural conscience? If I would give but one note and were to study never so long of it, I would give this note rather than any one, and that is this use I am now upon. If one duty that thou performest give strength to another duty, and make thee fitter for it, and enable thee to another duty, this is a sign that it is not meerly out of a natural conscience, for a natural conscience though it puts me upon the doing of it, yet it puts not strength in me to do it, but a Gracious principle puts me upon the doing of it, and puts strength in me to do it, therefore when I am put upon a duty upon conscience, and I find that one duty doth fit me for another, this is surely a gracious principle, not only fitteth me in the same kind, for so you may say, meerly through use I come to be more perfect, but when it fits in another kind, in another way, by exercise we come to be more fit for that habit, but here now in spiritual duties, one maketh way for another, though it be in another kind, in another way, this certainly comes from Grace, therefore if you mark this argument, that Gods mercies but makes way for another, therefore you will have one duty make way for another, this is a certaine signe of continuance of mercy to thy soul. Again seventhly.

U S E. 7.

It should be a use of reprehension of our unbelieving hearts thus. It is the way of God when he comes in one mercy, that we should look upon it as a door of hope for further; but yet (mark ye) our unbelieving hearts will usually draw consequences from Gods mercies to nourish unbelief, quite contrary to the raising hope and faith, not to make Gods mercies a door of hope to let in mercy, but make it a door of unbelief to shut out mercy, as you shall find an unbelieving heart working from mercies

cies thus, I, they are mercies indeed, but they wil never hold, they are mercies, but they are to prepare me for greater Judgments: and thus an unbeleeying heart wil work out arguments of unbeleef, from the very mercies of God themselves; This is a great sin, for God bestows mercys to raise up hope, and to help thy faith to work, not to helpe thy unbeleef to work, and yet (bretheren) there are many christians that make no other use of Gods mercies, but meerly to nourish their unbeleefe, and to strengthen their unbeleefe, whereas they should make them a doore of hope. Again, an eight Use should be this.

USE. 8.

Be ye merciful as your heavenly Father is merciful doth one mercy of God make way for another? let one good action (I mean of Mercy to your brother) make way for another, do not say I have done so much already, and therefore I may now go on, in my covetousness, no, if so be thou hast gracious principles, one action of Mercy must make way for another, one forgiveness of thy brother in one thing, must make way for another, one action of liberality must make way for another thus God dealeth with thee, and do thou so with thy brother, for so is the command, Be ye merciful as your heavenly Father is merciful. Now the last Use which I intended most of al, and is the cheife Use of the point, is this.

USE. 9.

A Use of Exhortation to us al, to follow God on in the way of his Mercies, when God hath opened a doore of hope to us, let us follow on after God; 63. *Psalme*, 8. the Psalmest there speakes of God unto them, but marke what use he makes of it, *my soule* (saith he) *follows hard after God*, O! this should be our course, doth

doth God come at any time particularly to us in any way of Mercy? Let our soule follow hard after God, when *Jacob* was wraſtling with the Angel, and day began to dawne, the Angel would have been gone, O! ſtrive and wraſtle the more. What! doth the day dawn? many times thou art wraſtling a longe time with God, & ſtil there is nothing but darkneſs in thy ſoul, but thou doeſt hold on through Gods Grace to thee, at length the day beginneth to dawne, God beginneth to let in ſome light to thy Soul, and yet (it may be) even at that time, God ſeemeth as if he would be gon, O! ſtir up thy ſelf then, and wraſtle indeed, when the day beginneth to dawn, O! that thou mighteſt have more might then, as (you know that place that) God bids *David* and his people, *when you hear the noiſe* (ſaith he) *in the mulberry trees, beſtir your ſelves, for God is going out before you then*; So I may ſay, when you feel God ſtirring in your hearts, and have ſome impreſſions of God upon your ſpirits, O! beſtir your ſelves, follow on the good work of the Lord. I remember we read in the goſpel, of the poore blind man crying after Chriſt, O! *Son of David have Mercy upon me*; ſome would have had him hold his peace, but at length Chriſt pitying of him, aſkerh who it is that cryed after him, and thoſe that were by, came to the blind man, and ſaied thus to him, *be of good comfort, for he calſ thee*; I have obſerved that he went as faſt as he could then, and feared no danger of ſtumbling at any place. So I may ſay to many of your ſouls, it may be your caſe at this preſent thou haſt bin crying for the ſight of thy eyes, O! that he would ſhew me his truth, and open the goſpel, and the miſteries of it, O! that he would open my heart, and give me a ſoft heart, and a beleeving heart, whereas I have an unbeleeving heart: wel, be of good comfort, he calſ thee, now he works by his ſpirit and calſ thee, O! now beſtir thy ſelfe, and go on after God in this way. It is a ſpecial part of the wiſdome, and duty of Chriſti-

ans, to observe what are the waies of Gods mercy towards them, (as I told you before) the connections of them, so I mean the beginnings of them, and therefore take this one note, It is a great reason why many Christians are so long time in darkness, and under the spirit of bondage, because they do not observe the beginnings of Gods mercy, how God beginneth with them, because they have not al the mercy they would have, therefore they neglect the observation of the beginnings of mercy: but now if thou hadst a heart to observe the beginnings of Gods mercy, and to pray when he begins to open the doore, and let in a little light, and so to follow God, thou mightest have been free from the spirit of bondage long ere now. But I must leave particular applications now, and come to the more general, and therefore seeing that this is the thing our condition requires, we must venture upon it at least now, though I should never doe any other thing, I could not forbear at this time, that God hath opened a doore of mercy, a doore of hope to us, to al England, I suppose every one sees it, and among the people of God it is the mater of their discourse, when they come together. Now what is it that should be our care? O! that this doore be never shut, that now our iniquities lock it not, now to follow God on in the way of his mercy; that is (brethren) a blessed doore of hope, and I may compare this doore of hope, to that doore that leads into the holy place, 1. Kings. 7. 50. the text saith, *That the hinges of gold for the doors of the inner house*, that door that went into the holy place, it had the hinges of gold. Bretheren, those worthies of our land, that God hath called unto our Parliamentary Assembly, they are the hinges of our door, and blessed be God they are not iron hinges, that they have not rigid & rugged spirits, not at al to regard the cries of the oppressed, no, they have been unto us as hinges of gold, our door of hope doth hang upon hinges of gold; If I were at this

this time to speake to that Assembly, those that are the hinges of our doore, to those that are our door-keepers, the door-keepers of this Door of hope, yea, rather those that are even this doore it selfe unto us, were I to speake, to them I would seek to lay the great charge, of that mighty trust that is committed unto them upon them; never any Assembly in the world had opportunities of greater mercy from God to his people than these have: were I to speake to them, I should seeke to perswade, that as ever they would have God open to any of their souls, for themselves or their posterity, when they shal knock at Gods door of mercy, that they would be faithful in keeping the door of hope open unto us, & that we might enter comfortably into it; I should cry unto them, that they would set open their own hearts, open ye gates, & be ye opened ye everlasting doores, that *Christ the King of Glory might enter into your hearts & families*, & be set up there but because I am not to speake to them, but to you this day, I shal direct my selfe unto you in that that is suitable to this auditory I am preaching to. The exhortation of God to you is; that you would take notice of the great work of God in this doore of hope, that you would give him the glory, that you would praise his name for his wonderous works, declare that his name is nigh, and therefore praise him, that you would seek God now earnestly, when he is in a way of mercy. O! that you would seeke to praise him now, and praise him as much as ever you can, that you would close with God in the great work that God is about, that according to your several places and rankes, you would further the great worke that God hath opened a door unto, that now you would bestir you: while God is stirring in a way of mercy, be you al stirring in a way of endeavours, according unto the mercy God hath sent, that your hearts might be up and kept up, as Gods heart is up at this time, and be kept up for ever, and to that ende that
your

your hearts might be a little stired to further the work of God, and towards keeping open this door, take these Considerations.

1. That door of hope that now we have, Oh! it is a door that God hath opened after much knocking; Oh! there hath been rapping at Heavens gate, mighty knockings there before this door was opened; Oh! the prayers of the Saints that have been put up for to get open this door! they have knocked again and again, and it hath seemed to be barred against them, at length prayer hath got open the door, as God promised, *Knock and it shall be opened*; This day that word is fulfilled towards us, we have knocked and the door is opened: now that door that is opened by such knockings, O! what great pity it were it should be shut again through our remissness.

2. It is a door of hope opened to us now, when as but a little while since we have had a door of fears, and miseries, and wrath, and wickedness, superstition, and Idolatry even let wide open, this was a door not long since; Oh! did not God open a door to us so, as if he would let in al wrath and miseries? What fears had we? What kind of communion had we when we met together? What shal we do? Where shal we go? the hand of God is against us, you were afraid that God would let in a deluge of misery, and at that door let in al his wrath upon us, and not only so, but a door open for al kind of wickedness, al superstition, Idolatry, cruelty; What a door was there open not long since? we may apply that place of *Jer. 23. 15.* where the Prophet saith, *Prophaneness is gone through the whole Land from the Prophets*, from wicked and scandalous Ministers and others. Oh! what superstition and prophaneness went throughout our Land, there was a door open from them to al wickedness, such a door as might bring al kind of wickedness. Now that we that had the mouth of such a door laid open upon us, should now have a door of hope opened

opened to us, Oh! praised and blessed be the name of God! shal we be unfaithful now to God in this way of mercy towards us?

3. Consider that we have this door of hope opened to us, after that we have been unfaithful, after the opening of other doors, how many doors have we shut to our selves hertofore? We have had many doores of hopes, other Parliaments before & yet we not following of God, we did wretchedly and wickedly shut these doors upon God, and upon our selves; and yet that God should open yet another door unto us, Oh Gracious God! as they cryed at the laying of the foundation of the Temple, Praise, Praise; so we may say now, though the work be not done as we desire, yet at the beginning of it we may cry, praise; praise.

4. This door of hope was opened to us, when in our own thoughts we give al up for lost, when we even thought in our selves, that God had for eternity shut the door against us, Oh! how have the ministers of God in former times been crying up judgments, and our guilty consciences did close with those truths, and say, surely now God is gone, peace is gone, Christ is gone, hope of God for posterity is even gone, we are made a prey to their teeth, and even swallowed up: and now after that we gave up al for gone, and did conclude that God had shut the door for ever against us: yet now for God to open a door of hope, this may work upon our consciences to sanctify the Lords name, and to follow the Lord with all our might in this way of mercy. Yea, shal I say further in the sixth place.

5. Consider with what a mighty hand this door of hope was opened to you; I remember I have read that *Josephus* speaking concerning the destruction of the Temple, he saith that at the time a little before the Temple was destroyed, that the Temple door that refused to be opened by thirty men, it was so great that it required the service of thirty men every morning to open the door.

door, and every night to shut it, yet a little before the destruction of the Temple, that door flew open alone of its own accord, and they took it as a mighty ominous thing as the hand of God. Surely this door of hope could not have been opened by al the skil and power of men, they could not conceive the way, God came by his immediate hand and opened it, a mighty hand, an out stretched arme of God hath taken the bars away, and opened this door of hope, now to abuse it, or not to thank the name of God in that, in which Gods hand hath seemed remarkable, Oh! this is a greivous sin, and a mighty provoking of God, since this is the door that Gods mighty hand hath opened. Again further.

6. It is a door that many adversaries have laboured to shut a long time, Oh! what devices, counsels, plots, al the waies that possibly could be devised to shut this door, but God hath kept it open, and put in a bar to keep it open notwithstanding our adversaries; We may say of this as *Saint Paul* in another case speaking of another door, in *1 Cor. 16. 9.* *There was an effectual door opened, and there were many adversaries for it,* so we may say that here is a door opened, and many adversaries there be. Yea further in the next place.

7. This door, Oh! it is a door of mercy by mercy, and therefore be thankful, (I say) it is a door of mercy by mercy. Brethren, had God opened a door of hope, though it had been the vally of *Achor* in the other fence, though God had given us the vally of *Achor* for a door of hope, in the other fence that the words are ordinarily taken in, that is, the vally of trouble, if God had brought never such troubles upon England, and we had been in never such trouble and confusion for the present, yet if God had made this a door of hope to bring in mercy, we had infinite cause of thankfulness. But yet this is his goodness, that we have a door of hope of mercy by mercy we may say of this door, as the scripture saith of that door in *1 Kings, 6. 31.* *And for the entering of the*
oracle

oracle be made doors of Olive trees, two doors also of Olive trees and carved; The doors of the Temple they were made of the Olive trees, and the Olive you know is a symbole of peace; our door of hope it is made of Olive trees, Oh! we might have had iron doors, and gates to rend our flesh, and we might have passed through fire and water to have come at mercy, but (beloved) we have a door of Olive trees, of abundance of mercies, yea, such a door in the enterance of which we find abundance of mercies, at the very threshold of the door, Oh! what mercies have been found already (I say) in the beginning of the endeavors of those that have been our door keepers, or rather our doors of hope, what abundance of Mercies have been found already? so that I may say of the endeavors of those assembled now in Parliament, as it is said there in the book of the *Canticles*, of the Churches endeavors in the time of reformation, for so that place is by many understood, In *5 Cant.* 5. *I rose up to open to my beloved*, what then? *And my hand dropped with Myrrh and my Fingers with sweet smelling Myrrh, upon the handles of the Lock*; what is the meaning of this? The Church of God when Christ had called by his spirit, afterwards stirred by his Grace, began to endeavor reformation, and the very first endeavoring of reformation, when they were but entered upon the door of reformation, Oh! it was very sweet in the Nostrills of God, very savory, my hands dropped with Myrrh, and my fingers with sweet smelling Myrrh upon the handles of the lock, when I was but endeavoring to open and to reform, then my endeavors were very savory to the Nostrills of Christ. So the very fingers of our worthies, do they not smel of sweet Myrrh? Are they not savory in the Nostrills of God, and in the Nostrills of his Saints? They are savory when their hands are but upon the very handles of the lock; therefore seeing we have such a precious door as this is, we are bound to seek God for the opening of it, and the continuing of

it open; but yet further.

Considering (bretheren) the wideness and the largeness of it; every one that doth but know how the constellation of things are abroad in the affairs in *Germany*, in *France*, and *Spaine*, and the *Low-cuntries*, and every where; they see that God is (as it were) conspiring together, to make this door of our hope wider and wider to us, and to enlarge our opportunities, God in this bids us come and aske what we wil and we shal have it, such a wide door that our fore fathers never knew, Oh! how would they have rejoiced to see this wide door of hope opened? Oh! how unthankful, unworthy wretches should we be, if such a wide door of hope as this should be neglected? Nay,

Consider not only (bretheren) the wideness of this door, but the treasures into which this door opens; to what doth this door open? if it open to that that hath no great treasure in it there needs not so much striving to get in; but if it open to rich and invaluable treasures, then there is need of striving to get in; surely (bretheren) this door of our hope opens into unvaluable and Glorious treasures; what treasures? the liberty of our estates is a great feavor, deliverance from oppression of wicked and unreasonable men is a great feavor, Oh! much more is our liberty of conscience; Is our liberty of conscience oppressed? That is the oppression that cyeth in Gods eares; The oppression of the poor, the oppression of bread, that cryeth, but when the children of God shal cry to their Father, Father, these proude prelatial men are those that take away our bread, they have cryed up to God, and God hath heard their crie, and now hath opened a door to deliver us from conscience oppression, and to grant us bread again, to grant bread to us, not only so but it opens to this treasure too, it opens to the treasure of the purity of Gods ordinances, and deliverance of us from those burthens. If I should name but this one burthen that is upon

the

the Ministers of God, and that woful burthen that is not upon their shouldrs only, (if it were only so it were enough) but upon the consciences of men, and that is the admitting of so many prophane wretched creatures to the Sacrament; it is an insupportable burthen to any conscientious man, that hath to do in such a thing as that was; those that are opposite to God, in the way of prophannels, that we must come and tel them here, take the body of Jesus Christ that was given for thee, no conscientious man but was oppressed by this and not only this, but for you also, for certainly (bretheren) there should be an excluding of such from those holy things, and to whom hath God committed the trust of this great ordinance of his? certainly he hath committed the trust to the Church; wheresoever there is a true Church, there this trust is committed, that if you wil own your selves for a true Church certainly you are trusted with it. But you wil say, we have no power to do it; pleade not so, you have a power, Christ hath given a power to every Church to do it, to purge out the old leaven, & therfore know when there is nothing between your power, & the the excercise of your power, but only suffering and affliction, your power is no power if you excercise not that power that Christ hath given you, the sin wil lie upon you, and this is no plea that there is a suffering between your power and the excercise of it. Now if God open a door this way, and we see some light to deliver our consciences from snares, and from these burthens, Oh! it is a blessing and mercy; it maketh a door to open to al Gods mercies, for this is the reason many sepearate from your congregations, not because they judg your Church a false Church, or your Ministry a false Ministry. But

1. Because they have not al the ordinances; of God in the purity of them, there are such corruptions, that they cannot medle with al.

2. They cannot enjoy al Gods Ordinances; though the Church be true, and the Ministry true, yet certainly

those that are consciencious, and look upon them, they cannot but be afraid, therefore if there be a door of hope to let in our brechren the out-casts of Israel, and to joyn with them in communion, certainly every gracious heart cannot but think this a precious mercy, that God should open the door of hope, and this should be your prayer and endeavour to the utmost you can, that this door of hope may be so wide, that your Brethren may come and enter in with the peace of their Consciences; As heretofore it hath been the honor of *England*, that others have come out of other Countries for their Consciences, and have been sheltered here, that now it be not the dishonor of *England*, that her own children should be driven out from her; because they cannot have liberty of Conscience, and that in things which some think they are but of an indifferent nature; if I say that now it should be dishonored by casting out, and contemning your Brethren, because they cannot have peace of Conscience, Oh! what a dishonor wil it be if it continue! therefore if God be opening his door, this ought to be your endeavor to seek God, and to endeavor that it may be so wide, that those that you Judge in your Consciences to be faithful and godly, may come in and enter in at this door, and enjoy peaceable communion with you.

10. This door it may further the setting up of Christ in his Kingdome of Glory, Christ hath been set up much in *England* in his propheticall, and Kingly, and Priestly Office, now that Christ may be set up in the Church to rule upon his Throne, to have a door of hope to open to that, that shal have an influence to the general reformation of al the Christian Churches in the world, for the beating down the Kingdom of Antichrist, such a door of Hope have we opened to us. Yea, and further besides this,

11. Consider what a dreadful thing it will be, if this door of Hope should be shut; though it is true; we have some

some comfortable Evidence it shal not (as I shal speak more by and by) yet who knows but that through our wretchedness, and want of preparation of the hearts of the People of this Land, but that this door may be shut again! Oh! the dismal darkness if once it shut again! Oh! the contempt that wil be upon al the Saints of God! Oh! the pride, and Rage, and Insolency of the Instruments of Antichrist against them, if this door be shut again! Oh then, if we should once again say, We looked for light, but behold darkness; Oh! it would be blackness of darkness then; what Flies would come out of the Land of Egypt then? How would all Superstition and Idolatry flow in upon us? what would become of your Posterity, and little ones? How would they ever be nourished up in the Knowledge of God and Christ? And you are nor likely to enjoy your outward Estates neither: if any of you think you have back doors to get out from Religion to keep your Estates, you may be mistaken, if this door be shut: therefore you have need to follow God all you can in this way to keep it open.

12. Had we hearts but to be faithful with God, though it be not much we can do; yet there is a Promise God made to the Church of *Philadelphia*, in *Revel. 3. 7.* To the Angel of the Church of *Philadelphia*, write these things, saith he that is Holy, be that is True, be that hath the Key of David, that openeth, and no man shutteth, and shutteth, and no man openeth: I know thy works; and behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it; surely these are an excellent people: and mark what follows; For thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my Name: Behold I will make them of the Synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lye: Behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee. God opens a door, and saith that no man shal shut this door; and

and yet truly (bretheren) it is very observable that we have from that famous instrument of God, that brought a great deal of light unto this book, namely Mr. *Brightman*, that I name for honours sake, you that are acquainted with his writings upon this book, shal find that he applies every one of these Churches, unto the Churches that should follow after to the end of the world and the estate of them, & maketh it not only literal, but Tipical to tipify Gods waies of dealings with other Churches to the end of the world, and it is very observable that he maketh the Church of *Sardis*, to answer to the Church of *Germany*, just according to his opening of Gods dealing with the Church of *Sardis*, he prophesies what God should do to the Church of *Germany*, and so it came to pass, and this Church of *Pibladelfhia*, he did interpret it thirty or forty years agoe (so long it is since he wrote it) of the Church of *Scotland* and see how far God hath made it good : God hath opened a door to them, and certainly such a door as shal never be shut; that which is opened to them, and they not only wil have it themselves, but God wil make them instrumental for others, and mark how they are described, for thou hast the Ministry, every one looked upon that Church with contempt, a very poor beggerly nation and an ignorant people, had little knowledge of any thing at al, had but little time, but yet thou hast kept my word, though they have little knowledge, yet they wil keep his word, yea, marke and consider how far he goes on, behold I wil make them of the Synagoge of Satan, which say they are Jewes, and say they are the Church of God, I wil make them to say they are not Jewes, they are not the church of God, but they do lie, behold I wil make them to come and worship before this people, & to know that I am God, even to worship before their feet, & to know that I have loved them; do not those that cryed out of them before, and rayled upon them, do they not now begin to be convinced that God was with them,

them, and therefore now we know how they are called by others, what titles now they have different from their former, thus God hath fulfilled it in part upon them, and beleeve it we shal have a share in that mercy even that door that is opened to us in that way, is so opened as it shal not be shut againe; wherefore then to conclude al.

1. Let every one take heed, let the fear of God be upon every soul, especially any of you that are more eminent than others in any place, take heed, as from God this day take warning, that thou be not the least interruption in the great work that God is about; certainly if you be, if you wil stand in this door to hinder the good that God is letting in, you wil certainly be overcome, you wil certainly be vanquished, you can never hinder the work God is about, and therefore those men that are superstitious, Antichristian, and would uphold that work (I say) those men are in some respects more unhappy, than the superstitious and Antichristian men in former times, because that those that before did seek to maintain superstition, & popery, & the like, then it was a time that God was peacable, and suffering towards the enemies of his people, and was content it should come in then, I mean content by way of permission, not by way of approbation, and did suffer it, but now is the very time that God is quite rooting it out, it is the very time that God is setting himself against it, and therefore they that shal now seek to uphold it, they are men that are most unhappy; because at that time they stand in the doore, just when God is coming with his power, and with his strength. O! take heed you have no hand in interrupting the great work God is about, and (my brethren) that we may give God the honor of this door of hope.

2. Let us consider with our selves, what we would have given heretofore, that we might have had such a door

door of hope, I am perswadeth many of us would have laid down our lives, O Lord if we might have purchased so much good as now is come to England, we would have counted our dearest heart blood well spent. Now seeing we would have given so much heretofore, O what shal we render now? that strength that we should have spent under the cruel rage of our adversaries, O! Let that strength be now spent to the praise and honor of our God under his mercies: there is a notable place of scripture for that in the 119. *Psalm*. 134. God had delivered him from his oppressours, and therefore he would keep his statutes; Thou hast (O Lord) delivered me from my oppressors, therefore will I keepe thy statutes; So that strength that we should have spent under the cruelty of our oppressors, now should be spent in the keeping of Gods statutes, and following the waies of God.

3. Let our hopes now rise higher, God would have our hopes raised higher, seeing he hath opened a door let us stand in the door, and let us not be discouraged, though we think perfect reformation a difficult thing, yet (brethren) perfect reformation now is not more difficult, than that we have now was difficult a year or two agoe; a year or two agoe that we now have was as unlikely, as perfect reformation now is; and therefore we are to raise up our hopes to higher & greater things: and therefore the King when he smote the ground twice or thrice, he should have smote seven or eight times. And (brethren) we have to deale with a great God and his designe is to magnifie his great name in the good of his Church, in the 17. *Psalm*. Thou hast shewed thy marvailous loving kindness, The word as is is taken by some may be read, Lord, make thy loving kindness wonderful, miraculous. God loveth to make his loving kindness to his Church miraculous. Now (brethren) we may hope to have that from God, that shal make God appear a wonder-working God, that shal fet up
God

God in his glory, now this reformation in our land, it shal set up God in his glory, that we hope for, our hope is at the lowest except we hope for such great things, as may set out God to be an infinite and great God. An ordinary reformation in deliverance from the oppression of the state, it is not enough to set out the infinite pardoning and loving kindness of God, wherefore then for the conclusion of al, O ! let every one therefore now goe on in the name of God, and stand in the door, and look how God is comming, and close with him, and meete God in every way of his mercy, in *Reve.*

4. 1. the text saith, There was a door opened in heaven, (brethren) certainly there is a door opened in heaven, let us *incourage* our hearts, and do what we can in our places, and with the strength that we have, let us open our hearts, and open our desires to him, let him know that we are willing to venture our estates, our liberties, our lives, and al that we are or have to maintain a good cause, God hath done much, he wil do much in *Psalmes*. I have brought you out of the Land of *Egypt*, open your mouth wide that I may fil it, I have done great things, brought you out of the land of *Egypt*, open your mouth wide that I may fil it. Certainly God he hath delivered us from the Egyptian bondage, let us open our mouths, and our hearts, and our Arms, and our hands wide, and the Lord wil fil them, and now the Lord grant to every one of you as he did to *Lidia*, the text saith, the Lord opened her heart, and so the Lord open your hearts. And as ye read there was an effectual door of faith opened to the Gentiles, so let this be the conclusion of al, I pray that at the last there may be a door of faith opened to this Congregation, to receive these truths that have bin delivered by faith.

OLD

OLD AGE

IS A
Crown of Glory,

Epecially
When found in waies
OF
RIGHTEOUSNESS.

Preached before the Company of Mercers at their Chappel.
May, 20. 1641

Proverbs, 16, 31.

*The hoary Head is a Crown of Glory, if it
be found in the Way of Righteousness;*

Have lately in this City Preached unto
Young men, and at this time supposing
this auditory to be intended chiefly for
grave Citizens (though others come in)
I have prepared to speak suitable unto
them; Psal. 148. 12. Young men and
Old men are called to praise the name of the Lord; as it
was a blessed time when the children cried Hosannah,
upon Christs coming to purge the Temple (for that
was the occasion) so it shall be and is a blessed time,
Fff 2 when

when Old men are coming into God, in the praise of his great works, when God shal reign Gloriously before the ancients of Israel: we have such a prophesie in Isa. 24. verse the last. *When the Lord of Hosts shal reign in mount Zion, in Ierusalem, before the antients Gloriously ; A blessed time when the ancients shal behold the Glorious reign of Christ, and be joyful in it : and in Revela. 4. It is prophecied again of the Elders (in the latter end of the chapter) that the Elders fel down and worshipped him that liveth for ever, and cast down their crownes before him.* This text of mine it is a proverbial sentence, setting out of the Glory of Old men in the waies of righteouness, we may spare dependance, for the proverbs are not as jewels linked in a Bracelet together, but as so many severall Diamonds lying one by another, and some of them severall Diamonds lying (as it were) in a box together ; Now this proverb hath in it two Diamonds set upon the crown of Old men, one below it, and the other a top of it, that below it is the *Hoary Head*, and a top of it is found in the way of righteouness. The hoarie head is a crown to Old men, if it be found in the way of righteouness. Two doctrinal points we have in the words, the First is.

Doct. 1. That Old Age is an honorable thing, it is a Crown of Glory.

Doct. 2. But then especially honorable, when it is found in the way of righteouness.

For it is not wholly limmited to the way of righteouness, the word [IF] is not in the original, it is honorable howsoever, but then most honorable when found in the way of righteouness.

I shal first prosecute the first Doctrine.

It is a high expression of the Holy Ghost here *The Hoary*

Hoary head is Glory and it is a *Crown of Glory*, *Corona ornatiſſima* ſaith one Interpreter, a *Glorious Crown*, *Corona exaltationis*, a *Crown of exaltation* ſaith another *Corona pulchritudinis*, a *crowne of beauty* ſaith another, The *hoary head* is a *glorious crown*, a *crown of exaltation*, a *crown of beauty*.

1. God honors Old Age, as by ſpeaking honorably of it in *Proverbs*, 20. 29. *Gray hairs are the beauty of Old men.*

2. God honors it by promiſing Old Age to the keeping of the commandements, in *Deut.* 4. 40. And you know that firſt commandement with promiſe, the fiſt Commandement, *honor thy Father and thy Mother, that thy daies may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.*

3. God honors it by preferring it before al riches, and before al other kindes of honors *Proverbs* 3. 16. It is ſaid, that in the right hand of wiſdom is length of daies, in her left hand is riches and honors, riches and honor is but in the left hand of wiſdom, and length of daies is in the right hand, thus God honors Old Age.

4. God honors it by giving a charge unto others to honor it, in *Leviti.* 19. 32. *Thou ſhalt riſe up before the hoary head, and honor the face of the Old man, and feare thy God, I am the Lord;* It is one of the moſt ſolemneſt charges that we have in the ſcripture, mark with what gravity and ſolemnity the charge goes; thou ſhalt riſe up before the hoary head, and honor the face of the Old man, and fare thy God, I am the Lord; your feare of God is layed upon this, And becauſe I ſee many young ones here, I ſhal ſomewhat direct my ſpeech to you, to you that make any profeſſion of Religion, you muſt manifeſt it in this; would you make it appear that you fear the Lord? Thou ſhalt riſe up before the hoary head, and honor the face of the Old man, and feare the Lord; this is one worke of fearing of God, to do this in obedience to God, and if you be bold

bold and impudent before the Aged, know this is an argument that the feare of God is not upon you ; The beauty and glory of religion is to be shewen in the duties of our relations, as between Father and Child, Servant and Master, inferior and superior, young and old, except religion doth manifest it self in our relations it is all in vain, Thou shalt honor the face of the Old man, and feare the Lord ; God laies the feare of his name upon this, and this is a great honor that God putteth upon Old Age.

Secondly, *It is honored by all good men.* Job. ; 2. 5. 6. And so *Elihu* there honors the Aged in diverse verses, and when *Paul* writ to *Phylemon*, in verse 9. of that Epistle, he maketh it as an argument, and *Paul* the aged, knowing it was a powerful argument indeed with *Phylemon*.

Thirdly, *Old Age is honored by the beathen themselves.* I remember I have read of the Lacedemonians, when their Embassadors were at *Athens*, upon a time they were in a Theatre, where abundance of people were gathered together, there cometh a grave Old man in, and presently the Lacedemonian Embassadors in reverence to the Aged man, they rose up to make the Aged man roome and place, upon this all the Athenians gave a great shout in applauding this their work, that they being strangers would shew such respect to age, and this was when they came into a Theater. This is a good rule when they come not into Theaters, but into places of Gods assemblies, when Aged men come not into Theaters to see plaies, but when they come to worship God, and hear his word, that young men should rise up before them, and reverence their Age, and shew reverence and respect to them ; and know I speak not this as a moral work, but as that wherein you should shew the feare of God.

Fourthly, *It hath been accounted in scripture a sign of great humanity, when the Aged are so honored.*

In *Deuteronomy*, 28. 50. There is a notable Place, God threatens that he would send a nation of fierce countenance, which shall not regard the person of the Old: It is an inhumane nation, of fierce countenance, that shall not regard the person of the Old.

Fifthly, *When God would threaten a judgment against a family, he threatens that there should be no Old man in it.* 1 Sam. 2. 31. 32.

Quest. *But why should Old Age be so honored?*

I have not time to search fully into the reasons of it, (there are others things that I especially intend at this time that are behind) but yet somewhat I must say. First.

Ans. 1. *They had the possession of the world before you*, and they have been means to keep the world, instruments to keep it in that order, and in that good condition in which it is.

2. *They are to be supposed to have knowledge, Prudence, and understanding*, and Old Age is knit together diverse times in scripture, and I remember the Chaldee paraphrase upon that place, *thou shalt rise up before the Old man*, translate it with this word, *qui doctus est in Lege*, before him that is taught in the Law, supposing that all Old men should be men of understanding, and men of knowledge, and indeed an ignorant Old man in these times of knowledge is a monster in the world, having had such a time of light as we have had shining so clearly, dazeling our very eyes, and sparkling continually in our consciences. Again.

3. *Old Age is that that all desire to come unto*, and therefore honorable.

4. *There is a kind of image of Gods eternity upon it*, God himself hath this title of the ancient of daies.

USE. 1.

If God then thus honors it, and puts this honor up-

on it, O let us al honor old age, let there be a reverent carriage of you towards them let them see the work of Godline, (the fruit of Godlyness, especially governors in their servants, parents in their Children, that they may see that since they were more godly, they have more reverence to old age, Advise with them, be willing to be guided by them, and yet not so far as to give so much unto age, as to make it to be a rule of actions, as to be led into any error by it. When antiquity is pleaded for that which is not truth, it is but the very mould (as it were) of error, many men when they are (as it were) mired in their error, and know not how to get out, especially in way of dispute, then they wil seeke to helpe themselves by antiquity as we read of *Jeremiah* when he was put into the mire, they put old rotten ragges under his arme-holes to lift him up, so many being plunged in disput, when they have nothing else to say, they thinke to get together old rotten ragges of antiquity, no true antiquity, for that is antiquity that is according to the first original of al antiquities *meus Iesus Christus* saith *Ignatius*, and *Crisostom* saith, Christ said not that I am *custom*, but that I am *the truth*. There is a great deal of power I confesse in old age, for to prevail with the younger sometimes in that that is evil, and in this sence the holy-ghost bids us *cal no man father*, no man must be called Father, to have the authority, to be a rule of our actions against the truth; we have a notable story in the 1. *Rings*. 13. 11. of the prophet that God charged not to returne back again the same way he came, and when he came to the Court, not to stay, nor eate in that place, but when he came to the Court, then they laboured to perswade with him that he would returne, that he would stay and eate, and he could easily put off a company of yong gallants at Court, but when he came unto the old prophet, *Now there dwelt an old prophet in Bethel*, (saith the text) *and this old prophet be comes* and

and he prevails with him to go against the command of God, it seemes he had some reverent respect unto his age, and so he prevailed with him when the other Courtiers could not. We must take heed that antiquity never so prevaile with us, no, not any old prophet, but though we must not be led into error through our respect unto them, yet stil keep our reverential respect towards them, especially you that be Children, reverence you your old parents, in *Prov. 23. 22.* there is a charge, *bearken to thy father that begat thee, and despise not thy mother when she is old; Hear thy Father that begate thee, and despise not thy mother, because they being weaker are more ready to be despised, therefore God giveth a charge that none must despise their mothers when they are old.*

2. Give respect to them by being durifully obedient, hearkening to their counsels. Even *Esau* himselfe that was so wicked, yet he would seeme to give some respect unto his old father *Isaac*, as in *Genesis. 18. 8.* And *Esau* seeing that the daughters of *Canaan* pleased not *Isaac* his Father, then went *Esau* to *Ishmael*, and took unto the wives that be bad, *Mahalath* the daughter of *Ishmael* *Abrahams* Son &c. When *Esau* saw the daughters of *Canaan* did not please his father, *Esau* would go and take the daughter of *Ishmael* *Abrahams* Son, he would not displease his own old father, no not an *Esau*, no, not a prophane *Esau* he would not displease his own old father, not in his march, in his choice, but would choose those that he thought were most agreeable unto the minde of his old Father.

3. Give respect unto your parents in bearing good wil to them. The very reason why many would faine have their old parents rothe from them, or they from their old parents, is indeed an argument (if it were considered) why they should rather desire to have their parents with them, namely, because they have many weaknesses, therefore thou shouldest rather desire to have

thy parents with thee, that thou mightest cover their weakneses, and bear with their weakneses, who is fitter to do it than thee to thy parents? the stork will teach thee to provide for thy old parents, they will helpe them to fly, and feed their old ones when they are not able to do it themselves.

1. It is a great evil in a common-wealth, and a signe of great Confusion, when younge ones shal behave themselves proudly against the old, in *Isaiah. 3. 5.* when the young come and behave themselves proudly against the old, it is noted as a great argument of Gods Judgments upon a Kingdome, and indeed it is a sad and greivous disorder, we love the houses and the Towns in which we were borne, much more then the loynes and the womb in which we were borne, to which we should give a greater respect. And.

2. God threatens those that are disobedient and stout to their parents, that the very ravens shal pick out their eyes, and under the law they were to be punished with death, if any parent would come and charge his son with disobedience, he was to be stoned to death.

USE. 2.

You that are old and ancient, seeing God hath put honor upon you, take heed you dishonor not your hoary haire. God saith you are a Crown of Glory, dishonor not you this your Crown of Glory, for your white haire wil make your sins so much the blacker; and we read in *Numb. 6. 7.* that the high priest might not defile himselfe because the consecration of God was upon his head. There is a Crown of Glory upon thy head, therefore defile not thy selfe. I have read of a Lacedemonian that wore his beard very long, and it was white, and one asked him why he wore it so long, he gave this answer,

answer ; I wear it long that I seeing my white hairs may do nothing dishonorable to them, may do nothing unbecoming those white haire of mine. If thou shouldest do any thing unbecoming thy Hoary head and Crown of Glory, thou takest the beauty away from thee, there is a *Puerilis Senectus*, an Old man may be a Child, as wel as a young man may be Old. A young man may be Old in respect of his spirit, and demeanor, and carriage. And much vanity may appeare in those that are Old, to make them be as Children. *Titus*. 2. 2, 3. you have there the exhortation of the Holy Ghost to Old men, how they should carry themselves *with al gravity, and with modesty*. It is a notable place that we are to observe, that *Reboboam* though he were above forty years Old, yet the scripture (you shal find in 2. *Chron.* 13. 7.) calls *Reboboam* a *Child*, he was but a Child, one that had a very childish Effeminate heart, when *Reboboam* was young and tender hearted, and could not withstand them, young, a child, tender hearted, of a softly heart, a foolish Effeminate childish spirit, that is the meaning of it, and yet this *Reboboam* was above forty years Old, whereas *Joseph* was a young man, and the scripture in *Gen.* 45. calls him a Father unto *Pharoh*. But Thirdly.

USE. 3.

If it be an honor to live many years in this world, O ! What an honor is eternity then to live for ever ? It hath been counted a great honor to have but any monuments of men after they are dead, to last for a great while, *Julius Caesar* he hath appointed his ashes to be kept in an urine in a Room to this day, (as they say) so very honorable is a monument. But then to live to al eternity with God, what honor is in that ? If the hoary head be a crown of glory, what crown of glory is it for a man to have eternal life ? to have that eternal crown of glory put upon him,

what are a few years here in this world, in comparison to eternity? but as a little plash of water in comparison of the infinite ocean. If thou hast cause to bleis God for a few dayes that he hath lengthened out to thee here, what cause hast thou bleis him for the hope of eternal life? Again.

USE. 4.

If the hoary head be such a Crown of Glory, if it puts honor upon men, *What then doth eternity it selfe put upon God?* If men be to be honored because of a few years here in this world; how is God to be honored then that is eternal? God doth glory him selfe in his eternitty, I am he that inhabiteth eternity. And the Elders in Revel. 4. 8. *they fel down and worshipped him that was, and is, and shal be for evermore.* I remember *Parents* tels us of a custom of the Turks, that they use every morning to have one proclaim aloud, The lord that was, and that shal be for ever, the Lord is eternal, he hath no beginning at al. Thou art but of yesterday, though thou hast lived now many years, the Lord he shal have no end at al, but though thou livest long, yet it wil be said within a little time, such an one lived to many years and is dead; as it is in Gen. 5. There *Methuselah* and others lived thus and thus many years, and *Adam* and others, and they died. And I have read of one that hearing that Chapter read, that such an one lived so many hundred years and he died, and such an one lived so many hundred years and he died, it made such an impression upon his spirit, as took him off from al the things of the world, and caused him to mind the provision of his eternal estate, and was the cause of his conversion, by reading the years of so many mens ages, and yet they dyed. Remember it must be said one day, such a man was seventy or eighty years Old and he dyed, but God abides for ever, we are but as grafs. And therefore if God wil have honor put upon you because of your Age, put you honor upon God because of his eternitty.

eternity: God he can have no time added to his time, there is no succession of time with him, God cannot be said to have continued, or to have lived a longer time now, than he did live before the world began, there is no time added to him, he is beyond all measure of time, and it is good for us when we enjoy any continuance of time in any comfort, to worship the eternal God, to have our hearts to delight in that eternal God that is beyond all time. It is a very observable place that we have in *Genesis* concerning *Abraham*, it is in *Gen. 21.* That when *Abraham* had been going up and down a while, and afterwards had a resting place, the text saith *Abraham planted a grove in Beertheba*: that notes that he was to abide where he planted a grove: and what then? and he called there upon the name of the Lord, the everlasting God. This is the first time that God is called in Scripture the everlasting God, and then did *Abraham call upon the name of the Lord*, the everlasting God, when God did grant unto him some abiding in that place where he was, that he could stay and plant a grove. Hath God caused an abiding in you, that you have lived a long time in this City in a prosperous condition? do you learn to call upon the name of God the everlasting God, give honor to the eternal God? But we must pass from this first point though it be a point of great use; yet the second is the principal, The hoary head is a crown of Glory; but when? When it is found in a way of righteousness. That is the Second.

Doct. 2. *That it is the way of righteousness that puts the Crown of Glory indeed upon the hoary head.*

That is the Diamond that is a top of the Crown, if the hoary head be an honor, this is the honor of that honor, if it be a Crown, righteousness it is the Crown, of that Crown

Crown Mensura vita non est longitudo sed honestum,
 The measure of life is not the length of it, but Godliness is the great honor we are to measure our life by. I suppose you have heard the speech of him that said, I have been long, but I have not lived long. Old men except they be righteous, they are long, but they can scarce be said to live long. If it be found in the way of righteousness, that is, supposing that you have been Godly from your youth, and so grow up to be Godly while you are, then that honors indeed: for though it be good for men to begin to come into the waies of Godliness at any time, and it is never to late to come in, yet to be *Elementarius Senex*, that is rather a dishonor to be a beginner when you are Old, in the great work, you should be treading in all your daies, rather a dishonor (I mean) that you do but then begin, therefore surely the text means this: If it be found, that is if you have gone on in the course of your life in righteousness, and so your Old Age doth not begin righteousness in you, but findeth you in the way of righteousness, you are in the way of righteousness, then it honors. It is spoken to the honor of that disciple Manason, in *Acts*, 21. 16. *There went with us also certaine of the Disciples of Cesaria, and brought with them one Manason of Cyprus an Old Disciple, with whom we should lodg;* An Old Disciple, it is a mark of honor unto him that he was an Old Disciple; and so *Obadiab*. 1 *Kings*, 18. 12. *I have feared God from my youth,* (saith *Obadiab*) and he speaketh of it, and the Holy Ghost records it as a great honor unto him, I have feared God from my youth. If any of you (for at that time *Obadiab* was grown ancient, if any of you) can say so, with *Obadiab*, The Lord hath now given me length of daies, and I bless his name that (though in weakness yet) I have feared God from my youth; Oh! this is honorable. As it is reported of *Policarpus*, *Policarpus* when he was about to die by Martyrdome, they would have him to renounce the truth,
 Oh!

Oh ! (saith he) these eighty [six years I have served Christ, and found him a good master, shal I leave him now? What an honorable speech was this for him to be able to say, these eighty six yeares have I served Christ and found him a good Master. Wil you appeale whether you can say, these sixty, these seventy years, or forty years I have served Christ, and found him a good Master, if you can, this is honorable if you be found in the way of righteousness.

1. This is a great evidence of the deep rooting of your Grace, and so puts a greater honor upon you, it is an argument Grace had a very deep root, in that it hath held out al this while, and flourished al this while. You know the seed that was sown in the stony ground, it came up a little for the present, but vanished away, but that that was sown in the good ground, it came up and flourished though in the heare of the Sun. Many have a good beginning as *Nero*, though he were an abominable wretch afterwards, yet his first five years were very eminent for forwardnes in Godliness, but afterwards sel off. But now if you shal go on and hold out til you be aged, Oh ! it is a blessed evidence of the deepnes of the root of Grace in your hearts. That is the first.

2. Those that are Old in the waies of righteousness, they cannot but be supposed to be very eminent in Grace and Godliness, they have gotten much in the waies of Godliness, they have growen to some excellency in holy waies; *Jobn* he began young, and continued Old in Godliness, for so he was, he was neare a hundred years Old, he could not be less, for his banishment was in *Domitians* time, which was eighty years after Christ, that he was banished into the Isle of *Patmos*, and then he could not be less than above a hundred years Old, and then he had divine revelations revealed unto him. Those that have continued long in Godliness, grow to a great eminency in Godliness. *Obadiab* (as some think) was that prophet *Obadiab* afterwards, that

that had continued long in the waies of Godliness; It is not with Grace as with nature, nature cometh to a period, and then decayes, but Grace groweth and flourisheth, though the body grow downward, yet Grace will grow upward; It is the promise of God in *Psal.* 92. 14. *That those that are planted in the house of God, they shal flourish in the courts of God;* Those that are planted in the house of the Lord, shal flourish in the courts of God, they shal stil bring forth fruit in Old Age, they shal be fat and flourishing; that is the promise of God, and therefore it cannot but be imagined, that there is a great deal of eminency in such, and therefore to be honored, having a crown of Glory upon them. And thirdly.

3. Those that have continued long in the waies of righteousness, they have had many experiences of God, wonderful experiences of the waies of God, the faithfulness of God, the mercies of God, the truth of God, in the course of his providence unto his Churches, and this is an honorable thing, *David* in *Psal.* 25. 6. he speakes of Gods mercies of Old; and in *Psal.* 74. 12. there you have been speaking of God, he was a King of Old, and in *Psal.* 44. And the begning, *there our Fathers have told us things of Old what thou hast done* *Psal.* 119. 152, *I have known thy testimonies of Old.* To have the experiences of Gods wil, and of Gods waies in the passages of his providence of Old, is a glorious thing, and to they that are Old in the waies of righteousness, they come to know exceeding much of Gods minde in that regard; and this is a crown of Glory. And Fourthly.

4. They that are Old in the waies of righteousness, that they give a good testimony to the waies of righteousness that they are good; An Old Servant that wil not leave his master, gives a good testimony of the goodness of his Master. The Bee that sticks long at the flower and wil not go away, gives a testimony that there

is a great deal of honor ^{long} to be sucked out there. As Apostates that fall from Gods service disgrace it, and (as much as in them lies) tel to the world, that there is not that good in the service of God as others beare them in hand there is, but those that are Old, and can say as *Poliscarpus*, I have found him a good master al this while, they honor Gods waies.

5. It is honorable because there are so few that continue til they be Old in the waies of Godliness; If we set many plants, and most of them vanish and come to nothing, but there is one or two that flourish, and come to be trees, and so prosper, we love them the better, and delight in them the more: so because God sees there are so few that continue in his waies, therefore those that do are the more prized by God, and the more honored by God; So *Paul* he tells us that of the most he was forsaken; 2 *Tim.* 1 15. 16. He praises for the house of *Onesiphorus*, because he had kept by him when most in *Asia* had forsaken him; that is honorable. Again,

Those that continue in the waies of Godliness they are honorable before the Lord, because they have passed through many difficulties in the waies of God. A souldier that hath passed through many dangers and difficulties in the Kings service, is so much the more honored. We read of *Solomon*, 1 *Kings*, 2. 26. That he honored *Abiathar* because he had suffered so much affliction with his Father of Old: so God will honor those that have suffered many difficulties, those that have gone through many changes of time, and yet continued upright God will exceedingly honor; in *Luke*, 18. *Because you have indured with me in the time of temptation, therefore I have appointed unto you a Kingdom,* (saith *Christ*.) Again,

It is an honorable thing to be Old in the waies of righteousness, because these have much acquaintance with God, they come to be of Gods long acquaintance. Now we delight much if we can meet with one that is of

our old acquaintance, we say Oh! Such an one is my Old acquaintance, he was my fathers acquaintance, therefore we prize him now. Now an Old man that hath been a Godly man a long time, he is our Old acquaintance, an Old acquaintance of God our Father, and therefore we honor him; in *Exodus*, 15. 23. Where *Moses* praises God (saith he) he is our God, and our Fathers God. Is it an honor to God that he was our Fathers God? Then it is an honor to you that you are Gods that are our Fathers, that you are our Fathers Saints; if God be honored for being our Fathers God, then you are honored for being one of our Fathers Saints, Gods Saint who is our Father. We reade of *Moses* that having been but forty daies conversing with God upon the Mount, and his Face did shine, if conversing with God forty daies makes his face shine, what wil it be to converse with God forty years? Oh! how must their faces needs shine being so long acquainted with him.

8. Those that continue gracious Old, they have done a great deal of service, and therefore honorable; especially if they have been in publique places. A publique Minister that hath continued to be Old in service for God, he is an object of much honor, to be exceedingly revered. I remember it is reported of *Basil*, that when the officers came to apprehend him, the story saith he was about holy duties, and the gravity and sparkling holiness of countenance, made the officers to fall down backwards, they were not able to beare it. A man that hath lived long in the service of God, is very honorable before the Lord, & before men we honor our Old Servants; if any one hath been your Old servant, you wil not see such an one want; he hath been my Fathers servant, before me, and an ancient servant to the family, and therefore not to be disrespected; shal we respect ancient servants to the family and company, then how much more is an ancient servant to the Lord to be respected

spected? How wil not many Glory in this, that they have been in the Kings service thus long? Oh! this is worthy of Glory, that thou hast been in the service of the Lord so long.

9. Oh! It is a crown of Glory to be Old in the waies of righteousness, because thou art neare to that eternal crown. *Rom, 13. 11. Our salvation is nearer than when at first we beleaved.* Thou art even almost at the heaven, and when thou art looked upon thus, thou art to be honored in that regard, An Old souldier that by being long in service, cometh to have the next place of preferment to be due to him, he is looked upon with respect and regard. It may be the next place in heaven is like to be thy portion, thou art neare unto thy Glory. Young men are to go on in their warfare here, but thy warfar is even accomplished, in *Isa. 40. Comfort you, comfort you my people, for their warfar is accomplished.* Now those are to be honored, it is a glory for a man to be neare the Kingdom of heaven, to be near this crown of eternal Glory.

10. If thou continuest Old in the waies of righteousness, then thy crown of Glory shal be exceeding great, exceeding glorious. The longer thou stayest for it, the more glorious it shal be; the longer thy crown is a framing, the more ful of Diamonds and Pearls it wil be when it cometh. I have read of an Emperors Son, that one speaking to him about the glory he was like to have hereafter, I, (saith he) the Cooks are a long time preparing the dinner, but we shal have the better cheer when it cometh. So though God hath let those that are ancient and Godly, live here in their Pilgrimage a long time, yet when it cometh they shal have the greater Glory. Put al these together, and certainly it must needs be, that the hoary head must needs have a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness.

USE. I.

We have cause to lament, that we have so few objects to honor as we have. Indeed It is a most glorious sight to see an Old gracious holy man, that hath been from his youth holy and Godly, it is indeed a most glorious sight, and may wel draw the eyes of al to behold it. I remember *Josephus* saith, that *Moses* when he was but little, he had that beaurty upon him, that al that passed by were even enamoured with his beaurty, and they could not pass by but they must stand and look upon him. Truly if there be a beautiful honorable object in the world, it is to see a hoary head in the waies of Righteousness; but O! wo to us that we have so few of them among us, blessed be God that there are any, but how happy we if we had more such objects to honor. That there are but few I give you these evidences. First.

1. How few old ones have we that delight when they come together, when they meete in their companies, to relate the experiences of the waies of God, of the passages of Gods providence, of the faithfulness of God, and of the goodness of God to them, and to his people, so as to give glory to his name: when they come together they tel a great many of old tales, or old fables, they delight themselves in telling the tricks of their youth, what they have done in such an Inn, in such a Tavern, or in such a company; they can revive their youthful sins again: but to discourse of the providence and waies of God to them of old, to give glory to him, where finde you this? Again secondly.

2. How few old ones have you that are fit to instruct young ones, and to come &c encourage them in the waies of Righteousness, and to tel them what they have found in Gods waies, and so to provoke them on to the waies of righteousness?

3. How few old ones have you that can delight to see God,

God, yet appearing more gloriously in his waies, in his truth, and ordinances than he hath done? nay, are not many vexed, and think to cast off al with an apprehension of novelty? new things that we have, and so upon that vex and fret, and wish that things were as they were formerly of Old?

4. How many have we that are ancient, that are spiritual and heavenly, that can say with *Paul*, *Now I have finished my course, and have fought the fight of faith; and henceforth is laid up for me a Crown of Glory. Come Lord Jesus, come quickly.* Certainly if old age be found in the way of sin, it is as dishonorable as it is glorious when it is found in the waies of righteousness 95 *Isaiah* 20. *a sinner a hundred years old shall be accursed* (saith God) *a sinner a hundred years old*; we read in *Eze.* 8. 12. When God would shew the superstitious idolatry of his people there, he brought *Ezekiel* and shewed him what the ancients of Israel did. O! it is a sore and heavy thing when as the ancients of Israel shall any waies countenance the waies of superstition and Idolatry; and therefore in 9 *Ezek.* 6. when God would come against his people in the waies of his Iudgments, then God bad the destroying Angel begin at those that were old, first, and strike them first; 1. it is a blessed thing when the Hoary head is found in the waies of righteousness, but when we have white hairs and black consciences, that is a grievous thing; Instead of being old in the waies of righteousness, to be old in adulteries, in *Ezek.* 23. 43. it is said there, *she was old in adultery*, that is an aggravation of her sin, that she was old in adultery: yea, to have the wantonness of their youth, that be now come to their old age, to have their old age be a sinke to the diseases of their youth. Those that are old in sin, they shall have old wrath heaped up for them, *Ezek.* 25. 15. it is an aggravation of wrath, that it is said to be *old wrath*, there is old wrath as well as old sins; An old enemy of God is a most dreadful thing, for him and his forefathers

fathers to have bin old enemies to God, an old earthy muckworme ; to be old and yet ignorant and superstitious, to be an example to draw others to that that is evil, through the venerableness of their age, this is a sore and a very grievous, and an evil thing ; the Lord speak to the hearts of those that are so, because they have so little time to make provision for their souls, to make up their peace with God, and it is hard for them to do it ; they that have bin in captivity seventy years, as we read of the children of Israel, that they had bin in captivity seventy years together : and so there are many men and women, that have bin in captivity under satan for these seventy years, perhaps for eighty years together, O! how hard is it to work upon them ? as if a candle lay a long time in the wet, it is hard to light that candel : it is as hard to worke the work of Grace upon any, that have layne soaking a long time in their corruptions, I will not say it is impossible, but give me an example of one man, that hath bin converted when he was old, only one seemeth to have som probability of it, and that was *Manasseh*, but (except that) I know no example of any, not that it is impossible, only this I speak to cause those that yet have not made up their peace with God, and yet they have one foot in the grave, to look about them while there is time, it is possible, but we must make account of it as a mighty great thing. God must magnifie his free grace towards you, for how shal God have his ende in working upon you ? what service shal God have from you, when you have given away your former time in the waies of sin ? the Lord speak to your consciences, and humble them before him at this day, for their condition is sad, and it is a most dreadful object. As it is a most glorious object to behold one righteous in his old age, so it is a dreadful object to se an old drunkard, an old swearer, an old prophane man is a most dreadful and fearful object to behold, but we hope that the Lord hath some objects among us, that cal for much reverence and respect.

respect, and to them I desire rather to speake.

U S E, 2

By way of encouragement, and by way of exhortation, much peace and comfort is due unto such, the Lord and saints look upon them as honorable. Thou art a Father in Israel, and God remembers all that thou hast done for him these forty, these sixty years. I remember Luther saith, That one gracious action is more excellent than heaven and earth, *Milies quam celum et terra* (saith he) one gracious action; and there is a truth in it, there is no gracious action but hath more excellency in it, than the frame of heaven and earth. Then those that have continued long in the waies of God, and have grown Old in them, Oh! how excellent are they that have performed so many gracious actions, and all are treasured up with the Lord; know the Lord hath Old mercies for thee, who hast been an Old disciple, and he wil not forsake thee when thou art Old. *Psal. 71. 9. Cast me not off in the time of Old age, forsake me not when my strength faileth.* And in verse. 18. *now also when I am Old and gray beaded, Oh God! forsake me not.* If thy conscience tells thee, that thou hast endeavored to serve God from thy youth, to do good in the place God hath set thee in, thou mayest now go with comfort unto God; Oh Lord! now forsake me not when I am Old, leave me not when I am Old. Now thou hast the blessings of the people of God upon thee, and wher soever thou goest out of the world, Oh! the sweet favor that thou wilt leave behind thee, thou art a glory and honor to all thy children, and shalt be after thou art dead and gone in *Proverbs, 17. 6. Childrens children are the crown of Old men, and the Glory of children are their fathers.* [The glory of children are their Fathers] I, when their Fathers are gracious and Godly, then they are the glory of their children. As

now

now? what an honor is it, that a child came of such an one? Oh! this young man he had a very gracious Father, an ancient grave Citizen, he did worthily in his time, he did God a great deal of service, he was a man of excellent gifts in the place where God had set him, surely there is a blessing for this child that had such a Father; why? The very mention of thee that art Old, is an honor to thy child after thee; wherefore, seeing God hath put a crown upon thee, labor still to brighten this crown more and more, to make it more glorious before thou diest, and that is the business I have to do, (and then I shall wind up all) to shew to you what Old men should do to make their crown more glorious, how they should exercise the work of righteousness so, as indeed to be glorious when they live, and when they die, and so, eternally afterwards. The first is this.

1. Bewail the sins of thy youth; that is one worke that is a very suitable work for Old men, wherein their righteousness should run; bewaile the sins of thy youth, and blest God that thou hast time to bewail them. Thus David in Psal. 25. *Oh! remember not against me the sins of my youth*, Oh! the many evils of my youth that have passed from me! Oh! happy had it been for me that I had begun sooner in the waies of God. It was *Austins* grievous complaint, *Domine nimis Seru &c.* Oh Lord! I love thee too late, said *Austin* when he was an Old man. So al you that are Old and ancient, look but to your former times, whether you did begin to grow gracious when you were young, if you have time to say, Oh Lord! I began to love thee too late, it had been happy for you had you begun sooner.

2. Labor to redeem the time, to do much for God while he continues thy time. It is a little time thou hast to live, Oh! let much be done in that time; The best of you have neglected the fore-part of your times, double now your diligence in the latter part of your times, labor to redeem it, by putting on others in the

waies

waies of Godlines that they may be more forward than your selves, to leave a succession of Godlines: after you are dead and gone. Think with your selves, what shall I go out of this world and do God so little service as I have done? how little and poor service God hath had from me all my daies. Again.

3. Encourage those that are young, that are to come after you: as *David*; come children and I will teach you the feare of the Lord, tel them what you have found in the waies of God, how sweet and how good they have been to you, labor with your servants and children, that when you die you may die so much the more comfortably, take heed of checking of young ones in their forwardness in the waies of God, take not advantages against them, that if they do offend thee in the least degree: I, this is your religion, this is your forwardness, this is your profession. Oh! if you were gracious your selves, you would be wary of checking of them in the waies of religion. It is true, if any of your servants or children, make profession of religion more than others, and yet shall be negligent in their duties, they are to be rebuked so much the more sharply, I but you must do it with Gravity, and tenderness of affection, and with sence of the name of God how that suffers, and this would beseech you to speak to them as in the name of God, to charge things solemnly upon their consciences and to sanctifie them by prayer: but in every passion to be checking them for their forwardness in religion, surely this is an evil. If they should make their moan to God, and appeal to God, that thy endeavor to please you what they can, but you take the rather advantage against them, because of their forwardness in religion, O! this will be heard in heaven against you.

4. You that are Old, labor to beautify the crown of your glory; bless God that you live to see any manifestation of the name of God, further than formerly you have done, that you live to this day to see Christ ap-

pearing for his people, and for his children, and his ordinances more than formerly, whatsoever many of you may think of it, yet certainly if many of your forefathers were left to live again, and to see these times in which we live, they would bless God with their Faces upon the ground for that you live to see. And I dare say, There is no gracious Old man living this day in England, but sees indeed cause of giving God abundance of praise, that ever they lived to see so much appearing of God as they do. Do not because of some troubles and interruptions vex and fret. *Zachary, 3.* And the latter end, that at the laying of the Foundation of the Temple, the old men that were there they sat as weeping and crying, the young men they shouted and they praised God, but the old men they wept, because they knew what was before, so many young men now they shout, and bless God for what they see, but many old men they weep, because it is not as formerly they can remember a great deal more peace in Queen *Elizabeths* daies, now there is such a deal of distraction & dissention, therefore they are ready to weep, when the foundation of the Temple, when the work of reformation is laid, Oh! they are ready to weep because of so much distraction, but put all together, and certainly never any man since England was a nation, nor since the beginning of the world, hath seen more of God and of his gracious waies to a people, than you have seen, therefore be not froward for that which is a misse, but give God the praise and glory for that that is well begun.

5. Shew your righteousness in this, that you are willing to open your hearts, to embrace what truths God shal come further reveal to you. Say not, what shal we have now? Shal we be wiser than our forefathers? Take heed of such arguments from your forefathers, you know that place in *1 Peter 3. 18.* Christ was said to come to lay down his life, to redeem us from our vaine.

vaine conversation, received by tradition from our fathers; therefore stick not so much to old customs, to what was in your fore-fathers times, but if God come to manifest any further truth, be ready to imbrace it, and bleſs his name for it, for there are truths that do rise in ſeveral generations. If your fore-fathers in time of reformation, ſhould have ſaid (as many of them ſaid) ſhould we be wiſer than our fore-fathers? We ſhould have continued in Popery ſtill, and yet we did think wel that they before us did decline from their forefathers, therefore we muſt look to the truths that are come up, that are manifeſted in ſeveral Generations; not that any truth is new, but the manifeſtation of ſome truths are more evident in ſome generations than in others, and therefore in 1. *Peter*, *1. 12*. The Apoſtle ſpeakes of being eſtabliſhed in the preſent truth. As in *Luthers* time there was a preſent truth, the point of juſtification that was the preſent truth of that age, and ſo in theſe times there are preſent truths made known, both concerning our outward and ſpiritual liberties. There was a great deal of falſe divinity before preached amongſt you, even concerning your eſtates, that you had nothing of your own, but al was at the abſolute wil of thoſe above you, you had no propriety at al, and for ſpiritual liberty, we know in what bondage we were there. Therefore labor now to underſtand theſe truths, and give God the glory of them, before you do imbrace theſe preſent truths. It is ſtrang that men ſhould be ſo much ſet upon former things, as to neglect the grace of God for the preſent, and al becauſe of thoſe that were before. As now among the Fathers (as we call them Fathers) though they be to be reverenced for their graces, yet they living among heathens, and coming newly out of heatheniſme, they were ſaine to yeild as much as ever they could, to the heathens among whom they lived, and did ſo, and therefore there were many corruptions among them, and ſo the firſt reformers coming newly out of popery,

they were fain to yeild, and did yeild so far as they could for the gaining of them, therefore we must not make that that was heretofore; the rule of things, but bleſs God for what is revealed at the present.

6. Another work of Old men for beautifying their crown is righteouſneſs is this, you that are ancient often think of eternity, you are now juſt a launching into the ocean of eternity, and in a few years there wil be a mighty difference between your conditions, between that that is now, and that when you ſhal be entered upon an eternal eſtate. Think much of eternity al you that are ancient. Al young ones ſhould have their thoughts much weighed with eternity, nothing wil take of the thoughts of Old and young more, than to have them ballaſed with the thoughts of eternity, eſpecially thoſe that are ancient.

7. Take heed of thoſe things that are the uſually diſtempers that accompany Old age; as namely, timorouſneſs, Oh how you would faine die in peace, you have lived al this time in peace, and are loath to ſuffer any thing for the truth; *Polycarpus* did not ſo, when he was eighty ſix yeares of age, he was courageous. So labor you for young mens courage for God, even in the time of your old age. Take heed of ſuch a ſurlineſs and pettiſhneſs of ſpirit, that becauſe you have not heretofore received ſuch things, therefore now you wil not. Remember it is reported of the Senate of Rome, that when *Tiberius* would have had Chriſt to be honored as a God, Oh! it muſt not be done, (forſooth) why? *Because the Senate did not firſt motion ſuch willing*, becauſe it was not firſt motioned by the Senate. Many times in your meetings, though many be convinced of a good thing, they wil give notes againſt it, why? becauſe they that were moſt ancient did not firſt move it, becauſe it was put on by the young ones firſt, therefore though it be never ſo good, they wil ſtick to their Old

waies

waies, O! take heed of such a furlinels and pettishness of spirit; Remember the Gretians, it was said of them, that when they wished a curse upon their enemies, it was that they should please themselves in bad customs; and it is a greivous curse indeed; when old men are set upon such things, that they wil not bauk what they have done heretofore; And then again, another thing for the honor of your crown in the waies of Righteousness, is,

8. When God shal take you out of this world, (as ere longe must needs be) labor before to prepare your selves so, as you may die in faith, in the hope of the glorious things, that God is working for the Church in this latter age, for certainly God is doing great things for his Church in this latter age of the world, greater things than ever yet have bin done, and those that are a live may live to see glorious workings of God in the world, more than before; and though you are not like to live to see the great things that God intendeth to do, yet thus far you may glorifie God before you die, die in faith; as old Jacob did. It is a notable expression of old Jacob, when he lay a dying he called his sons to him, and saith in *Gen. 48. 21.* And Israel said to Joseph, behold I die, but God shal be with you, and bring you again to the land of your fathers.; So you that are old when you ly upon your death beds, when other young ones com about you, say thus to them, behold I die, but assure your selves God wil be faithful in his promises to the Church; there are glorious things adoeing for his people; in *Heb. 11. 22.* the faith of Joseph is there commended; in that when he dyed he gave order concerning his bones; why? what work of faith was it, for him to give order for his bones to be caried out of Egypt? yes, it was a work of faith, that he beleevd God would fulfil his promises; do you die so beleeving that God wil fulfil those blessed promises he hath made to the Churches. And,

9. Take heed now in this your old age of a worldly spirit

spirit, this is that that is charged upon old men, and yet it is the most strange and unreasonable thing that can be, and it is very observable, that God hath promised length of daies to the quite contrary, and yet we see this distemper of heart prevails with old men exceedingly, in *Prov. 28.16.* *but he that hateth covetousness shall prolong his daies*; and yet it is observable that old men are most subject to it, and yet the scripture promiset length of daies by hating covetousness; none of you but would fain live a year longer, now hate covetousness especially in these times. There is nothing wil more dishonor your crowne, than the sin of covetousness in these daies, because if ever there were times that God called for spiritual and heavenly hearts, now is it; in *Reve. 4.* we read of the discription of the severall ages of the Church, one was like a Lion the second a Calf, the third a Man, the fourth an Eagle, the last state of reformation of the Church should be like an Eagle that is the heart of those that lived in that state should be Eagle like, soaring aloft in heavenly and spiritual things, and so it becometh those that are old. Be not now basey sparing and pichning because God hath now great works to do for his people. I have read of a people in India, that worshipped the tooth of a beast; and when it was taken from them, they offered an incredible mass of treasure to recover the tooth of the beast againe; because they put religion in it; If these heathens should be willing to disburse an incredible masse of treasure, to regaine that religions relique of a tooth of a beast; how willing should you be freely to lay out your estates for the reformation of religion for the getting of the truths and ordinances of God to be in freedom amongst us; We know that both the state and necessity of our brethren calls for free liberal hearts, and you that have the crown of glory in regard of age &c. are to go before others, be you free to lay out for them; Remember it is reported of the Romans for the

hono

honor of them, that at the very time that *Hanibal* was in the feild, they would be purchasing of those fields when their enemy was there, and would give a round sume for them. Be not so distrustful, but be willing to disburse in this way, that may be so much for the reliefe of our brethren in Ierland, and for the setting up of the gospel there, though for the present there be some hazards; Ordinarily those that are Old are full of fears and distrust, but of al they should be the freest from them; And in the last place.

10. Let your praiers be, and your imbracing of the gospel so for the present, as you may have hope when you die, that you shal leave the gospel as an inheritance to your children afterwards; with what comfort may an aged man or woman die, unlesse they may have hope the gospel shal be left to their children; Not many years since when old people died, that had any sight in the waies of God, they died with trembling hearts, for they thought; Now I am going, and what miseries my Child may be brought to see I know not, it may be he may be brought up in popery and Idolitry, but now when you die, you may have a hope to leave the Gospel as an inheritance to your Children; especially if your prayers be strong, and your imbracements of it as it ought to be; It is said of *Iustin* the younger, that he ran mad with this conceite, that the Roman Empire should decay, in his time, he was so extreemly perplexed with such a thought. So it should be with every generation, what! that the gospel should decay, and the entail and evidence of it be cut off in my time, it should go near every one of us, and therefore incourage your selves, and let there be a youthful vigour in your spirits, to see to propagate the Gospel, that you may have hopes to leave it to your posterities when you are gone and it is not longe you shal have it, for consider, you have had a blessed talant of grace in the time God hath afforded to you, I dare say that there was never
eight

eighty years since the world began, so happy for the revelation of the mystery of Godlyness, as hath bin for these last eighty years, they that have lived them have had such an eighty years, that cul out any eighty years since the beginning of the world; never had a nation such an eighty years as this nation hath had, therefore know that you have much to answer for, and remember this, If you have any Godliness at al, you have made many covenants and vows to God in your times, fulfil them before you dy, die not in Gods debt, you have put up many prayers, and every prayer is an ingagement to you in the waies of Godliness, and if you thus beautify your Crown, when you come to die, O! how sweet wil death be to you, your pillow wil be soft when you come to die if you can say so (according to your measure) as Christ did, in Job. 17. *Father, glorifie me with thy selfe, I have finished the work thou hast given me to do;* Think but with your selves you that are ancient, if you were to die, whether you are able to say thus as Christ did, for so you may say in your measure, though not so perfectly as Christ did *Father glorifie me with thy selfe, I have finished the work thou hast given me to do;* Thou knowest it hath bin my care in the daies of my poor pilgrimage, to finish this great work thou gavest me to finish in this world, O! How sweet wil death be to such an one that shal die so.

E S E 3

One word to you that are young, (and so I have done al) Is it such a crown of Glory to be found Old in the waies of righteousness? Do you then begin to be Godly betimes, that if you live in this world you may have this crown set upon your heads when you are ancient, for is it not better for you to be plants of Gods house, then weeds upon the dunghil, Those that are wicked are but as weeds upon a dunghil, but you that are Godly are as plants in Gods own orchard in the last of the Ro-

mans,

mans; 3. We find that *Andronicus* and *Junia* are commended, because they were in Christ before saint *Paul*, *They were in Christ before me*. It is an honorable thing to be in Christ before others, this is honorable when you are yong, and then going on in the waies of Godliness al your young time, and so in your midle age, and til you come to be Old. Here in my text you have this crown prepared for you, for so saith the Holy Ghost here, The hoary head is a crown of Glory, if it be found in the waies of righteousnes.



FINIS.



But when it pleased God who separated me from my Mothers Womb, and called me by his Grace to reveal his Son in me. To reveal his Son [in me] he doth not say to reveal his Son [to me] but [in me] so the words are: so that indeed it doth besit a Minister of the Gospel to be a profitable Minister when Jesus Christ comes to be revealed [in him]. And so much for the expression [hath committed unto us] that is, put in us the word of reconciliation. As if the Apostle should say whereas the Lord hath been from al eternity plotting as it were the great work of reconciling the world unto himself, in that great mystery of godliness, doing of it in Christ, and this is the work that above al things concerns the glory of God and the good of Soules, and the Lord hath been pleased to appoint some select messengers for to carry this his name about the world, and to shew unto the world what those glorious counsels of his wil hath been from al eternity concerning the Children of men, this great Doctrine of reconciling the world unto himself in Christ, is the very business that we are sent about the world for, and are as the Embassadors of Christ to come, and in his name to treat with the world about Reconciliation with God, about making up their peace with God; so that here you have the work of the Ministers of the Gospel, & what great things are committed to the Ministers of the Gospel, He hath committed unto us the ministry of Reconciliation, that is the work, so that from hence the point is this, according to the words of the text.

Dost. That the Ministry of Reconciliation with God is committed unto the Ministers of God to preach unto the World. The Ministers of God have a comission both from the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; to preach the Doctrine of Reconciliation to the people, for here we have it in the very words which follow. We are Embassadors of Christ as if God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christs stead be you Reconciled to God, for Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is likewise in the comission

mission of Gods Ministers, when they come to preach in the name of God, and that you have in *Nahem. 9. 20.* *Thou gavest thy good spirit;* It was the Prophet that came to instruct them, it was the Spirit of God in the Prophet that did instruct them, So that the Ministers of God have their commission from the Father, from the Son, and from the Holy Spirit, to come to the people and to reveale the great counsels of God unto them, they are sent by the whole Trinity unto the people, here is their commission, you have it clearly, But the commission is more immediately from Christ (though there is the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in it) yet it is more immediately from Christ, because Christ is the great Prophet of the Church, & it is part of the propheticall office of Christ to have the great counsel of God his Father in the mystery of our Reconcillation to be opened to the people, Christ was first annointed, and then he doth as it were, annoint other officers to this great work, in *Isa. 61.* There you shall find the great Prophet, he is first annointed, *The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath annointed me, To what? To Preach good tidings unto the meek, he hath sent me to bind up the broken heart, to proclaim liberty to captives, and the opening of the Prison to them that are bound, to proclaim the acceptable yeare of the Lord, and the day of Vengeance of our God, to comfort all that mourne, to appoint unto them that mourne in Sion to give unto them beauty for ashes, the Oyle of joy for mourning, the garments of praise for the spirit of heaviness, that they might be called Trees of Righteousness, the Planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified, that is in effect the same with this, the Ministry of Reconciliation, that is but a large expression of the Ministry of Reconciliation, and as you see here, it is a prophecy of Christ, that first Christ is annointed, this Christ is appointed by God the Father and the Holy Spirit, for the Spirit of God is upon me, because the Lord hath annointed me, there is the holy Spirit in it,*

God the Father appoints him, he only may be said to be the appointer; and the Holy Spirit going to anoint Jesus Christ to be a preacher of the Gospel, and he being the prime, and the cheif Prophet of the Church, he doth appoint others to exercise as it were some work of his propheticall office, that is, to preach the great Doctrine of Reconciliation, hath committed unto us the Ministry of Reconciliation, & this you shal see is the commission that Christ gives in the last of Mark, 13. 16. verses. And he said unto them, go yee into all the world and Preach the Gospel to every creature, he that beleiveth & is baptised shal be saved, and he that beleiveth not shal be damned. Go ye saith he, and preach to every creature, he that beleiveth and is baptised shal be saved but he that beleiveth not shal be damned, this is the Gospel, the doctrine of Reconciliation by Christ, he doth not give them a bare commission, but he joyns his own power together to this commission, and tells them that his power doth go along with them in it. Math. 28. 18. And Jesus came and spake unto them saying, All power is given unto me in Heaven and in Earth, What follows in vers. 19. Go ye therefore and teach all Nations baptising them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. What a commission is here, what a preamble to the commissions is here? I have received all power both in Heaven and in Earth, And than he tells them, Go and teach al nations, as if Christ should say you are going about the greatest work that ever any creature hath been imployed in, in this world, for so it is certainly, The Ministry of Reconciliation is next to the work of Redemption, that Christ was employed about is the greatest work that any creature in this world was employed about, whatsoever the world thinks of it, no Angel in heaven was ever employed about a greater work then this, and therefore being of so great consequence, Christ makes this preface, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth, go ye therefore, as if Christ should

should say, Be it knowen to you now, that the power that is given to me by the Father, shal go along with you and therefore be encouraged, but they might wel have said, who is sufficient for these great things? But be not discouraged saith Christ my power shal go along with you to assist you, to comfort you, to encourage you, it shal go along with you, to make your Ministry profitable unto them that do belong unto my election; It shal go along with you to defend you from al adversaries, The world will be enraged against you, When you come to preach this Doctrine, But now my power shal go along with you, to defend you from them al, to strengthen you against al oppositions in the world, and to enable you to suffer whatsoever shal be brought upon you; and further saith Christ, *I am with you [Alwayes] even to the end of the world.* One would have thought that that should have been sufficient that Christ should have said *I am with you to the end of the world,* But there is something more in this, *I am with you [Alwayes] even to the end of the world,* (that is) I will not be only with you, so as not wholly to leave you, but there shal be no one moment of time to the end of the world, but in it I will be with you, I will not only overshadow you and send my presence with you, but every moment, every day, every sermon you preach, and then, I will be with you to the end of the world, those were dead above 1500. Yeates agoe, and yet Christ saith he will be with them to the end of the world, that is with those that should succeed them in the Ministry of Reconciliation, This is the commission, And when they come to any house they are to begin thus, You shal say Peace be to you when they come to any place, that is the peace of God in Christ. Now this doctrine of Reconciliation is that that must be understood by preaching. We can read but very little of it, scarce one letter in all the book of the creature, we cannot come to understand it by any knowledg of our own, but it must be taught.

taught us, no, nor by the creature, But thus much may be understood by the creatures, Gods continuing to the world, and shining upon the just as well as upon the unjust, and abundance of Mercy heer doth this declare with a loude voice, that there is some possibility for men to be reconciled unto God, there is mercy for mankind, there doth seem to be a loude voice in the goodness of God in the creature to sound out in the eares of al the world that man is in a better condition than the Devills, for certainly, if God had no intention to do good unto mankind, he would not continue so many Mercies as he doth; But now this cannot shew us what is Christ; but it may shew us thus much, that God hath a way of mercy for the Children of men, and I think in part, that text may be meant of this that we have in *Rom. 10. 18.* Where the Appostle speaks concerning the Gospel, *but I say have they not heard? Yes verily their sound went into all the world,* have they not heard of the Gospel that is here spoken of, Hath not *Israel* heard the Gospel? Yes verily, their sound went into all the Earth, and their words unto the end of the world. And this text if you compare it with the *19. Psalm*. We may have cause to wonder much at the quotation of it, and there you have it a little different, as in the vers. 4. their Line (that is, the great character of the Grace of God that is written in the book of the creature, as it were in a line,) that is gone out throught the earth, and hath a kind of sound in it, at least we may see it written, but hence you see in the *18. Psalm*, It is clerly spoken concerning the works of God, In the Sun, and in the Heavens. The Heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament shews his handy work. The creature hath a loude voice to call us to God by repentance, now there can be no calling of us to Repentance, but it is a voice of the Gospel, And the Appostle saith plainly in the 2 of *Rom.* *That the patience of God calls us to Repentance,* in verse, 4. *whatsoever leads to Repentance hath something of the Gospel,*

Gospel in it, Patience and goodness, though we never come to heare of the Ministry of the Gospel, yet it is that that calls us to repentance, and it is cleare in this, because that is spoken of in the creature; the loude voice in the creature in the 19 *Psalm*. it is applied to the Gospel in *Rom.* 10. and except you understand it so, we cannot tel you that the sound of the Gospel hath gon to the utmost parts of the earth. We cannot understand in the Apostles time, how the Gospel went to the utmost parts of the world, for there are many places that are not found out yet, but this kind of sound of the Gospel goes throughout the earth, that by the voice of the creatures men ought to come to know thus much, that surely there is some way for God to be pacified towards sinful men, though they cannot tell which way, or what way, suerly there is some way, and many of the Jewes knew no other way but this, they knew there was a Messiah to come, but what he was; or who he was, they know very little of him. Now the Devills have no such work of God towards them, nor such bounty and patience and goodness towards them whereby they can conclude that God hath any thoughts to be reconciled to them, Though its true, they are not yet fully under the torment that they shal be, yet they are under so much torment as they are said to be reserved to the great day in chains of darkness, whereas wicked and ungodly men are preserved by the bounty and patience of God, and the cords of Gods bounty and mercy is towards them, and therefore they are not reserved in chaines of darkness as the Devil and damned are; So that by the bounty of God in the creature we may gather such a conclusion, that surely God hath some way to shew mercy unto mankind. But we can never have any thoughts by any works of God in his creature, that God should send the second person in Trinity to take mans nature upon him, to die, to suffer for mans sin, to tender up satisfaction to divine Justice, and then al must be brought into this

Covenant

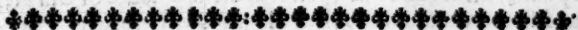
Covenant, & then he must be the head of the second Covenant, and they must be made Members of his body; now the Creature hath no such mystery as this, and therefore in the 3 Eph. 8. verse, saith the Apostle (speaking what his ministry was) unto me who am the least of al Saints is the grace given that I should preach amongst the gentils the *unsearchable riches* of

τῶν ἀνεξήγητων πλεον, *investigabiles divitias*, not to be paced or traced out: ἀνεξήγητος of α and ἔχον *Vestigium, qui nullis vestigiis indagari potest.* It is used also Rom. 11. 33.

Christ, they are unsearchable, speaking of the riches of Christ, as they are of Christ they are unsearchable; the word is there, the Riches that are without footsteps, there is no foot steps of the riches of

Christ, if we speak of the Doctrine of Christ the Mediator as it is indeed in the Gospel there are no foot steps of them in the Creature, therefore, though there be some kind of sound in the Creature, that it is sure, that God hath some kind of way to be reconciled; but now the sound of the Gospel, this is committed to Ministers to Preach, & therefore in the. 1 Cor. 1. 21. the Apostle saith, *That in the Wisdome of God, the World by Wisdome knew not God; it pleased God by the foolishness of Preaching to save them that beleeve.* (Mark) the world by Wisdome knew not God, certainly, the world did know there was a God, and that he was infinite in power and goodness; but the Text saith, they know not God, (that is) they knew not God savingly in Christ; they might know that God had some kind of way to shew mercy to sinners; but what way they knew not, and by [Wisdom] that is, by al the Wisdom that was revealed by God in the Creature, and by al the Wisdom they received from God, they knew not God by Wisdom; true there is an abundance of the Wisdom of God in the Creature, several acts are no other then several beames of Gods Wisdom shining in the Creature, and the knowledg of these acts, are no other but the

the severall beames of Gods Wildome shining into mens understandings : take either of both them, and by both these it could not know God in a saving way, but by the Foolishness of preaching, that is ; by the preaching that the Men of this world do account foolishness, the Lord is pleased to save those that beleieve : so that it is evident that the Ministry of Reconciliation is committed to the preachers of the Gospel.



CHAP. 40.

Why God chose Men rather than Angels to dispence the Mystery of Reconciliation. The Reasons thereof.

NOW it is to be enquired after, First, why God would choose men rather, to be the dispensers of the great Mystery of Reconciliation then the Angels ? God hath not committed unto them this word of Reconciliation (though it is true the Angels they do go about, and they sometimes witness to the Gospel) as you may read afterwards) But they are not chosen by way of office to the Ministry of the Gospel ; that is not the office they are appointed to, so as the Ministers of the Gospel are ; God hath not chosen Angels in an ordinary way to come and dispence those great and glorious things unto the Children of Men.

Object. You wil say, had it not been better that God should have chosen the Angels to come in and preach Jesus Christ, than men ? for they are poor weak Creatures, and like our selves, and now when they come to stand up and Preach Jesus Christ, the great things about reconciling men to God, should we think that they know more then we ourselves ?

Answer. You must not think that there is no good to be

be done till one comes and tels you that you never heard of.

But you must know; that it is by vertue of the ordinance of Christ: because he hath appointed a Minister of the Gospel to come, and in such a way to preach, though the instrument be like your selves, and perhaps may not have a deeper understanding then some of you, yet you are to look upon it beyond the matter that he speaks, you are to look upon it as the ordinance of Christ, and so to expect, and look at all means whatsoever. But now the great standing ordinance in the Church of God is the Ministry of the Gospel, It is this that is committed to us to Preach, and this therefore is to be looked upon as the power of God to salvation in those that God intends Salvation to: God hath not chosen the Angels, but Men, and upon this reason, because we are not so capable of conversing with Angels as men; we are not able to stand before them; when an Angel hath sometimes appeared to a gracious Servant of God he hath not been able to bear the glory of it, but to fall down, and when the Angels came in the 2 of *Luk*. and said, *Glory to God on high &c.* The Angels struck the Shephards with amazement.

And in the second place, the Ministry of the Angels could not be so effectual, Angels do not so fully understand the windings & turnings of the hearts of men so as men do, A Man is more conscious to the turnings and windings of his own heart then any Angel can be, he may know his own heart more then Angels can, and by knowing his own heart he may be able to speak more suitably; we do not in read the word that Angels knew the thoughts of the heart of men any further then they are some way exprest; nor the Devils. That is made to be the property of God, to be the searcher of the heart; but a Man may search his own heart in a great measure further then the Angels, and so they may the better speak unto the hearts of others, and so God in Wisdom rather

rather commits the Ministry of Reconciliation to men then Angels.

But a third is this, and that is a special one, that the power of God may the more appear in the conversion of souls unto Jesus Christ; and in this one thing, the power of God doth appear a great deal more then in making Heaven, and Earth.

First, The Doctrine of Reconciliation, is the most high supernatural thing that is in the world, it is above the reach of a creature.

Secondly, It is that that doth beat down mans nature as much as can be. But now that a few poor fisher men at first, to whom was committed the word of Reconciliation, and a few of the Apostles that were in a poore meane contemptible condition, that sometimes had scarce raggs to hang upon them, were whipt up & down, & put in the stocks as if they had been the vilest Rogues that had been in all the world, and yet that God should subdue so many nations upon the face of the earth, and in time should bring the whole world in general to receive this Doctrine by such poore and weak meanes, O! the infinite power and glory of God that doth appear. In this God uses weak meanes, to shew the greatness of his power, and for that you have a cleare text in 2 Cor. 4. 7. But we have this treasure in *Earthen Vessels*, that is the Ministry of Reconciliation. O! it is a treasure indeed in earthen vessels, the word is in the greek, in vessels of shells, there were some rich shells, that had on the outside a plaine shely, that when you came to the Sea shore you should look upon them, and they looked meanly as if they had not been worth a farthing, but within the shely there was a pretious Pearle that was worth many thousands of pounds, to say the, we have this treasure in a shely, that is in a poore weak fraile vessel than, a contemptible vessel we have this pearle, And why doth the Apostle gives the reason, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. There

is a mighty power of God that goes together with the Ministry of Reconciliation. Whentoever any soul is brought home to be reconciled unto God, certainly there goes a mighty power, yea, there goes an hyperbelical power together with it.

Object, But how wil this appeare, that there is such a mighty power of God that goes with the Ministry of Reconciliation ?

It appeares in this, that there is such mighty things done by such poor weak and contemptible means that men should be willing to part with any thing in the world, yea their very lives, and beare the greatest torments of the most cruel Tyrants, and that for the witness of this truth. Now this appeares to be the mighty power of God, and this seemes to be a secret answer to any objection in 3 Cor. Is it so that the Ministers of the Gospel are far more Glorious then the Ministers of the Law? What is the reason that the Ministers of the Gospel are in such a meane condition, so much meaner then the Ministers of the Law? There was an high Priest, and he had glorious Robes, and had pretious stones upon his brest and shoulders, now we have no such things, Here is a company of poor Fisher-men, weak meane men that the world regards not, suerly the Ministers of the Law were more Glorious then these Ministers of the Gospel. No saith the Apostle for al this, we have this treasure in earthen vessels that the excellency of the power of God might appeare, and not of man, and we are willing (as if the Apostle should say) that the power of God may appeare more, that the glory of God may shine bright; we are willing to be Earthen Vessels.

Another Reason may be this, why God commits this Ministry to poor [Men] rather than to Angels; surely God hath a further end then wee imagine, it is (in just judgement) to be a stumbling block to wicked, and ungodly men, whose hearts are opposite unto the Glorious Gospel; that (as we know) Christ said he preached

preached in parables, that in seeing they might not see, and in hearing they might not understand; as a just judgment of God against the Pharisees, and others whose hearts were wicked, and unclean, and opposite unto Christ, that the glorious things of the Gospel might be hid under those parables. So I make no question but the means of the Ministry of the Gospel, (which the world counts Foolishness) and the mean condition of the professors of the Gospel is made by God as a stumbling block to ungodly men, who God intends should perish eternally, because their hearts are wicked and perverse, & I hate them (saith God) therefore will hide this rich treasure from them; But those that I love, I wil open the inside unto them, but others shal have nothing but the outside, they shal only have the visible part. But now there are others whom God intends to save, and they come, and the Lord (together with their outward Ministry) speaks to their hearts, and opens the inward treasure to them, and they see the Glory of it, and admire at it, and they come to tast the sweet promises of the Gospel, and they adore God in receiving such things as these are: so that God fetches about his ends this way, but (in his just judgment) hides his Gospel from some, and reveals it to others, and therefore saith the Apostle in 2 Cor. 4. *If our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost*, the ministry of the Gospel it is hid to some, but it is to those that are lost; he hides it from them by this outward means, the outside; Thus you see why God doth commit the Ministry of Reconciliation unto men rather then unto Angels.

CHAP.

C A P. 4th.

Why God wil not himself immediatly dispute this Gospel Reconciliation.

BUT further, it may be said; why wil not God immediately himself preach this Doctrine of the Gospel, The Mystery of Reconciliation? we see many infirmities in men; Men are ready enough to stumble at all infirmities of the Ministers of the Gospel (which by the way should teach Ministers of the Gospel to have a care how they walk) but because there are so many things to be excepted against men we would be ready to think, if God would himself preach the gospel from heaven men would regard it more.

No, but God wil not do so, though God wil assist the Ministry to make it effectual in the hearts of those that shal be saved; yet he wil not speak himself from Heaven, but he wil send men like themselves, and let men hear or not, and howsoever, (though men think, if God should speak himself they would hear him) yet if they heare not men, they would not hear God. God spake himself from heaven in the delivering of the Law, but men did not keep the Law; but now God wil rather speak by men; because he doth delight to make use of every creature according to the capacity of it. The Lord takes a wonderful delight in the use of all means that is suiteable to a creature, And therefore you shal find (which is very observable) that though God did begin to speak from Heaven to *Saul* that he did convert (who afterwards was called *Paul*) Christ spake at first from Heaven, but mark, he would not do the whol work himself immediately; but before the work should be accomplished there should be means used

used in *Acts*, 9. 4. There Christ speaks from Heaven ; but I beseech you observe it, what doth Christ speak from Heaven ? he doth not preach the gospel ; it is only the word of conviction *Saul, Saul, Why persecutest thou me ?* This was enough to strike *Saul* with astonishment so that he fell upon the earth, and said Lord, what wilt thou have me to do ? But mark, what answer is given him ? *Go into the City and it shal be told thee.* You must not think though I begin to speak from Heaven to you, but that you must be content to set upon means, and so he did with *Saul*, he arose from the Earth in verse, 8. God made him stay a good while before he would tel him what he should do ; he was three dayes and nights and eate nothing, and was praying al the while unto the Lord, and then in vers, 10. Saith the Lord to *Ananias* (a Minister of his) Go to such a place, and there thou shalt open to *Saul* my Mercy: this Doctrine of Reconciliation. It is true, I begin to think upon him; but I wil not go on in the work ; you shal do it, and he shal attend upon your Ministry to let him know, what my mercy in Christ to his Soul is, and I wil blese your Ministry unto his Soul.

And thus you see how God stands upon the making use of the meanes, I make no question but it is something like to Gods dealing with many of you ; though God at first begins himself, and strikes some terror into your hearts. A man when he is going about his business, he hath some suddaine thought dents into his heart, Lord where am I ? What if I should now die ? how can I answer for such and such things before God ? And thus perhaps he comes to be troubled in his Conscience by some immediate work of God, but he wil not go on in this work immediately, but he sends him to the Ministers of his word, and there he shews him what he must do concerning his good ; I wil give you a notable text to shew you how God stands upon means ; in *Act*. 10. 2. He had

had some kind of the fear of God, but understood little of Christ; he was a souldier, a Centurion of the band called the Italian band; he had a greate many souldiers that were wicked, but yet he had some that were godly: But though he was in that place, yet he was a devout man and ful of prayer, (as it is commendable for Souldiers to be much in prayer,) because carrying his life in his hands, he had need carry Grace in his heart, and then in the 3. verse, (it is a very observable Scripture) first, God accepts of his prayers, and appears in a Vision to him, and sends an Angel to him, and tels him that his prayers were accepted wel, but God had revealed so much of Christ to him which he was very ignorant of.

Object. You wil say, seing God did send an Angel to him, why did not God reveal Christ by the Angel? No, he would not, he sends an Angel to *Cornelius* to this end, to bid him send for *Peter* that was a Minister of the Gospel; This should be the message of the Angels, to tel him that God regarded his prayers, and almes. I but, as if the Angel should say, God hath other things to tel you; but the truth is I have no commission to tel you, my commission is to tel you that you should send for a Minister, he sent for *Peter*, and *Peter* came and Preacht Christ unto him; as you may see in verse, 34. so that you may see that God doth use to work upon men by means, and surely, herein God wil honor humane nature in taking it upon himself, and for Gods honoring of the Minister of his word, take this one note (which is likewise very observable) that Christ himself when he Preacht upon the Earth, we never read that his preaching was so efficacious to convert so many Souls, as the Ministers of the Gospel did; *Peter* when he came to preach the Gospel, Converted three thousand Souls at one Sermon, and you never read that Christ converted so many at a Sermon, Christ himself preaching immediately the Gospel did never convert so many as *Peter* did;

did; The reason is to shew, that we must not expect so much the immediate preaching of God unto us; as God and Christ preaching to us by the Ministry of Man; that is the meaning of it: so that now you have had the point opened unto you; that God commits unto us the Ministry of Reconciliation.

I shal endeavour to apply it.



CHAP. 42.

Use, 1. *The sending of the Ministers of the Gospel is to be accounted a glorious blessing.*

First, If this be the great work of the Ministers that are sent amongst you to dispence the Ministry of Reconciliation to you; O! then certainly the sending of any of the ministers of the gospel among you, you are to account a glorious and a wonderful blessing of God upon you at any time; why? what is their errand? They come to treat with your souls about Reconciliation with God, and God hath appointed this the greatest means of bringing souls unto himselfe, to be reconciled unto himselfe, and therefore it is one of the greatest blessings in the world to have the ministry of the gospel in any congregation. *Blessed be your eyes saith Christ that you see such things,* and your ears that you heare such things, that God hath disposed you to live in those times wherein you have the mighty things of the ministry of the gospel shewed unto you; it is a good argument that god hath many souls to be reconciled unto when he sends the ministers of the gospel unto a place, and therefore when *Paul* was going from a place, God appeared to him in the night, and bid him be of good courage and faith unto him, *I have many souls in this City.* When God in a special manner sends the preach-

ing of the gospel into a place let them bless God from their souls, and take it as an argument that sure God hath many souls in this place that he intends to be reconciled unto, for the ministry of the gospel is the ministry of reconciliation; it is the fruit of the prayer of Jesus Christ, and for that compare those scriptures together and it will be clear; in *Esay. 49. 8.* this is quoted in *Cor. 2. 6. 2.* now what is that? that is, when *Paul* was preaching to them, and he makes this the fulfilling of that prophecy in *Esay. 49.* now it is clear, that, that prophecy is a prophecy of Christ's praying to God the father; for those that did belong to his election, that in due time they might have the doctrine of reconciliation opened to them; now saith God I have heard thee in an acceptable time; and saith *Paul*; now is the acceptable time, so that at any time when you come to heare a sermon, and hear the doctrine of Reconciliation opened to you; you should think thus much, This morning, or this day have I had the fruit of the prayer of Jesus Christ for this congregation, and for my part in particular Christ was praying unto his father for this long before I was borne, and now do I come to have the fruit of the prayer of Jesus Christ; This very sound of the gospel in my ears this morning, it is no other but the fruit of the prayer of Jesus Christ unto God the father long before I had a being and the world was.

CHAP. 43.

Use. 2. The Great honor of Ministers that are Faithful.

SEcondly, Hence appears the great honor of the Ministers of the Gospel in their Ministry; we will not attribute to our persons, but to our

our work, certainly, if they are committed to the Ministry of reconciliation, they are sent about the most honorable business that ever was in the world; to dispence unto the Children of men the great mystery of Salvation by Jesus Christ. So if a Minister be faith free in it, it may be said of any one that God uses in this; Happy that ever he was born, and blessed be the womb that beare him and the paps that gave him suck, if so be he be faithful in this his work; for he is imployed about the greatest business that is in the world; never did God employ Angels in a work of greater consequence, and in a work wherein they are more honored they are called in scripture Angels of the Churches, for indeed their work is Evangelical, and when he speaks of them in 1 Cor. 4. 1. *Therefore let a man account of us as of the Ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God.* Bretheren, we could be willing, that for our persons they should be never so contemptible before you if so be the contemptibleness of our persons might further the glory of our work, But we know ordinarily, that the contempt of persons hinders the honor of the work, and therefore saith the Apostle, let a man so account of us as of the Ministers of Christ, and stewards of the Mysteries of God: we are appointed stewards of the mysteries of God, we are stewards to deal out unto you the mysteries of life, and Salvation, Joseph was accounted highly off, when he did deale out the Come in Egypt, and now this work of reconciliation is that that the Angells prie into, the Angels learne instruction from this mystery of reconciliation, it doth, not only beleeve the greatest men in the world to attend upon it: but the Angels themselves honor it, and learne by it. I wil give you a text for this because it may seem to be hard unto you, the text is in Ephes. 3 verse, 10. *To the intent, that now unto Principalities, and Powers in Heavenly places might be known by the Churches the manifold wisdom of God; that (not only men) but the*